THE COMMONWEAL

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

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CONCERNING SEÑOR RIVERA

NEW YORK has once more been fussing over a minor scandal. There is being erected, as all of us surely know, a seventy-two story building to be known as Rockefeller Center and to be used for housing radio stations, theatres and whatever else a kind fate sends. This building has a main lobby, as a matter of course, and those who planned the structure naturally wished to offer something particularly dashing to the, well, lobbying public. Accordingly they looked hither and thither and at length bethought themselves of Señor Diego Rivera, a Mexican artist of real talent, whose work appeals especially to those numerous persons who got no opportunity to understand what expressionism was until it had gone relatively out of date. Expressionism is not a contemptible form of art, but on the whole it seems best suited to modern buildings. For it helps to make them very modern, indeed. And there would seem to be no good reason why modern architecture is worth while in New York unless the spectator is made to realize positively, at a glance, that the place he is in belongs to the present or at least the future. Of course expressionism already belongs to the past, but since the American public does not yet know this, no great harm is done.

Enter Señor Rivera, scaffold and all. He paints in fresco, smack against the wall, so that his work achieves relative permanence in this world of change. He is also a "creative artist"—that is, contrary to Eric Gill and the masters who hold that great painting is done only when patron and worker collaborate, Rivera believes whole-heartedly in the rightness of his ideas and impulses. Accordingly there appeared in the Rockefeller Center lobby a "symbolic group" in the center of which stood Lenin cementing the bonds of friendship between a Negro worker and a white worker. The Lenin face was unmistakable, goatee, mustache, bald head and all. But now the masters of Radio City took alarm. They did not like the symbolic group. Señor Rivera did. Accordingly he was paid in full, and expressionism bequeathes still another problem to central New York. For, as has been said, painting in fresco is not easy to do and still harder to undo.

The incident has many aspects, all interesting,

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but too numerous to mention. We shall deal with one—the rightness of Mr. Rockefeller's unwillingness to accept the Rivera picture of Lenin. It may be said at the outset that the employers of the artist ought to have known beforehand that he was both a Communist and a propagandist—i.e., one who believes that the purpose of art is to preach the ideas of the individual artist. Failure so to know may be set down as still another triumph of contemporary American thought and culture. There had been a lot of talk about Rivera. Accordingly he was a great artist. And of course one always desires the collaboration of the great. But in its way Mr. Rockefeller's refusal to take the picture is a far greater tribute to what is essentially valuable in American thought and culture.

Regarding the citizen of this country at his best, it can safely be said that he has never been wholly of the bourgeoisie. One could always expect of him a certain freedom of gesture, a limited openness of mind, toward the convictions of others. This he got by reason of his country's mission to absorb all sorts and kinds of people, and this he preserved, despite momentary lapses, in the face of great difficulties. But until recently he was not without convictions of his own. The biography of the American, as witness the recently published story of his life by Mr. John Moody, is really a chronicle of backbone—backbone which can bend or even twist but which never wholly gives up the power of being stiff and straight. Our best men have respected the opinions of others, but they have not professed to be content with the opinions of others.

It needs neither a philosopher nor a statistician to tell us that this prime American quality has lately deteriorated. On the one hand, frenzied narrowness has gained its share of ground; on the other, a fatuous indifference to plain logic, in the interests of freedom, has grown manifest. Of the Christian group as a whole it may be said, for instance, that a desire to promote good-will has led to all sorts of bad reasoning. Generous applause of blasphemies incognito is all but a commonplace occurrence. If the Christian—even the Catholic—family does not take a newspaper or magazine which asserts that God is a myth and morality an outmoded joke, the family does not feel exactly up to date. If the bright young man is not able to swallow a heresy with every cocktail, he somehow surmises that faith precludes intelligence. And therewith we get down to Lenin.

The American liberal who fails to approve of Communism is no longer a liberal. You cannot get by with asserting that this revolutionary movement is a challenge to the Christian conscience (which it undoubtedly is) or that it has proposed an interesting solution of several current problems (which it probably has). All that no longer suffices. To be up and coming demands of you actual expressions of horror whenever a Communist is under fire. Does not everybody have the same right to opinions as you yourself? Or rather does he not have a greater right, since your opinions are more traditional than his? Notice the Rivera point of view. He was employed by Mr. Rockefeller, a capitalist but likewise a Christian Protestant gentleman, who has been at some pains to demonstrate his awareness that wealth is held in trust. Yet it did not occur to him that Mr. Rockefeller had any convictions to which he might be entitled. The superior status of the Communist was self-evident. He could draw reverent pictures of Lenin, but dislike of pictures of Lenin was outrageous. He could safely assume that every spot in the United States was a becoming pulpit, sermons from which would be not only well paid for but also deeply admired.

Without making too deep a bow toward Mr. Rockefeller, we wish to go on record as grateful to him for having momentarily saved the honor of American liberalism in the form to which we ourselves subscribe. He did not say to Señor Rivera that policemen would be dispatched to keep him from drawing pictures of the entire G.P.U., if he so desired. He made no remark to the effect that rattle-brained artists should be hanged on the nearest lamppost. No, he simply declared that he, Mr. Rockefeller, didn't want a portrait of Lenin in the main lobby of Radio City and that there jolly well wouldn't be any such portrait there. To us this attitude seems finely characteristic of the best in our national life, and we hope that it will find imitators great and small. We hope also that American liberalism will halt its gradual decline into supine and fragile hallelujahs for assorted servings of nonsense.

Yet there is a sense in which admiration of Señor Rivera is in order. He is a flare-back to the older order of definite crusading convictions, to—if a profane phrase is allowable—a policy of "to hell with everybody else." The Señor and his comrades mince neither words nor deeds. A platform is to them a place from which to preach a fiery gospel. There are times when one is tempted to adopt the same point of view. It is relatively easy to admire the firm outlines of a society dedicated to one set of doctrines, as are the societies created by Lenin and, by way of contrast, Hitler. Yet the conceptions underlying genuine American liberalism are far nobler and finer, provided one has sense enough to understand them and courage enough to live by them. They possess something of the great peace and effectiveness of Christian courtesy. They keep, probably by reason of the fact that they were molded during England's greatest if most troubled century—the seventeenth—some of the now dimming beauty of men who still realized what civilization, and with it art, really and truly are.

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WEEK BY WEEK

STRESS and turmoil have dominated the past week. The international situation, far from clearing up, has suddenly changed for the worse; and it is not a secret that the Roosevelt administration may be forced to reckon with wholesale repudiation of debts without having gained compensating advantages. Associated with this is a decidedly noticeable decline in the effectiveness of diplomatic action. Europe is buzzing with predictions of renewed armaments and war, while Geneva looks on helpless and dismayed. The President has apparently given up hope that much good will result from the Economic Conference. Problems so numerous and vast confront human society, and this society is so wofully divided, that expecting a great deal to come from a discussion "around the table" seems pretty futile. But for many reasons the solution of domestic puzzles is not easy or inviting when the international situation is so clouded. The news that the White House has come out for a sales tax to provide needed revenues is, perhaps, the most interesting recent commentary on our quandaries. It shows that, do what we will, government eventually boils a good part of itself down to a question of raising money. Nevertheless we are encouraged by this decision. It is an indication that refuge will not be sought in fantastic schemes to "readjust" currency, and that the simple truths concerning the necessary origin of money are still recognized.

Political Activities

IT HAS become evident that one of the dangers latent in the German situation is to be sought in the United States. So radical a break with the so-called "practices of Western liberalism" as the Hitlerites are attempting to effect would suffice, quite apart from excesses against the Jews, to challenge all that here seems advanced thinking. There is to our knowledge not a single English-speaking paper which has had a good word to say for the Nazis—a sufficiently remarkable phenomenon when one remembers that there still do exist journals a plenty which would heartily applaud local offensives against Communism. When one adds the whole grievous complex of anti-Semitic activities, which touch at a very sore spot the wound opened wide by the 1928 campaign and its aftermath, one sees that a gulf has opened wide between present-day Germany and this country. Americans of German descent feel discouraged and hurt. Though they themselves find much about Hitlerism as incredible as good Hoosiers found the Klan excitement of some years ago, they feel that a conscious effort is being made to fan into flame animosities latent during recent years. Nor is the Jew faring much better. Saddened, angry and often terror-stricken, he tends to assume that every reserve expressed on the subject of Germany, or on any other matter affecting the present policies of what is termed Israel, is based upon hostility and race prejudice. Nor would it be wrong to suppose that the very violence of the Jewish protest has awakened slumbering antipathies in many Gentile breasts. One need not go very far with one's ears open in order to discover that anti-Semitism is by no means a thing of the past in this country. All of which is serious enough to justify a feeling of alarm.

The German Situation

WE OURSELVES feel that the situation is not necessarily so hopeless as is often assumed. After all, one encouraging sign is that opposition to Hitler in Germany has made itself felt at the top. Not a single outspoken recruit to the party has been won, so far as we know, among the intellectual, political or moral leaders of the German people. It is rather mass support which has flocked to the Nazi celebration, and one needs to remember that Hitler is a sufficiently astute politician to estimate that support pretty shrewdly. Indeed, he has written some things about the "people" which compare favorably with what one hears in enlightened Washington council rooms. Hitler will be obliged, in order to govern at all, to conciliate, utilize and compromise with the politically helpless but none the less indispensable groups at the top. Of course there is a chance he may not be able to do so, and that Germany is in for a worse mob triumph than it has yet experienced. But there is also a chance that he may succeed. It seems to us the better part of valor to stake something on this chance—to bear American interests strictly in mind and to promote them as sanely and soberly as we can. This means less popular hysteria, with unescapable repercussions abroad, and more leadership. We suggest that the time has come for Mr. Roosevelt to appoint as representative and capable an ambassador as is at all possible. The hour is not propitious for more "watchful waiting." This point of view is confirmed by the address on Germany's foreign policy just delivered as we write. Detailed comment must be reserved until next week. But at present one thinks it obvious that the speech was a straightforward bid for international friendship. Hitler did not abandon his own ship—that is, he sacrificed no legitimate demand upon which his own nation has insisted. For this he can hardly be blamed. But he did voice the desire for peace which characterizes democratic rather than reactionary Germany, and he did meet the suggestions of President Roosevelt more than half way. The disarmament problem is by no means solved as yet, but there is now some reason why hope for a settlement need not be abandoned. All in all, we think that Hitler's

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speech has helped to clear the air of at least some misconceptions.

Railroad Organization.

THIS issue contains a paper on the New York Central system, which we asked Mr. John Leeds Kerr, one of the best students of railway transportation in the country, to write for us. Our object was to afford a close-up of the transportation problem, which so vitally affects the investment and employment structure of the nation. It is very easy, even fatally easy, to talk about the matter in general terms or to seek refuge in a few blanket statements. What is a modern railroad? What is its history, its basic concern, its make-up? In order to provide a good example, Mr. Kerr chose New York Central, not because it is worse off or more poorly managed than other systems but because it occupies so important a place in our industrial life. We wish to emphasize the fact that this is an objective description, written with all possible care.

Catholic Camps

UNDER the sponsorship of His Eminence Cardinal Hayes an organization has been formed to be known as "The Associated Catholic Camps." There is a fine underlying appropriateness in this, besides practical utility. In the rear of churches in the New York diocese a poster is to be displayed listing the camps endorsed by His Eminence. An extensive radio program over leading radio stations has been arranged. Details with regard to camps may be obtained from the office of the Association. At the beginning of this month, the Cardinal addressed a letter to the parishes in which he struck the key-note of the reason for Catholic camps by stating that, besides the two objectives to be sought in sending children to camps of providing for their health and for wholesome recreation, there should not be forgotten a third objective of providing "a life more in harmony with God's design." Though the first two objectives are admirably taken care of in the average non-sectarian camp, there can be no question that the third comes in very incidentally, if it is provided for at all, and is in fact apt to be overlaid and obscured by numerous rites and practices which are pagan in origin and essence. These forces are, from a Catholic standpoint, the more pernicious because, as the Reverend George C. Ehardt pointed out in his radio address over WLWL, camp councilors have a natural appeal close to the heart of the boy.

THE UNDERLYING appropriateness of a Catholic sponsorship and direction of camps, which are a traditional feature of American life harking back to frontier days, is the fact that Catholicism had an unrivaled association with the discovery and pioneering of this country. The specific cases of this are amply familiar, and should be made real to youth. Youth gets an unforgettable thrill from scouting, from even the most aimless kind of scouting, so there is properly Catholic scouting, not only for the good of discovering new lands for fellow men but also for the glory of God. Youngsters like to play at Indians, and they can equally appreciate—youth responds readily to high adventure, to the finest aspirations—the carrying of civilization and Christianity into the wilderness. Catholic missionaries have a unique history of friendly association with the Indians, of seeking to better their condition rather than of seeking simply to "drive the varmint out." They were unequaled scholars and recorders of aboriginal conditions in our land. They were motivated by probably the purest motives of any comers to these shores. These are things that the Catholic boy can learn around the camp fire and in play by the lake-side and in the woods and fields in a way that will speak most powerfully to his understanding and loyalties. In a Catholic camp the divine sacraments have their appropriate place as well as the hiking and swimming and games that make a summer holiday and stalwart manhood.

American Aviation

LAST year we fearlessly made the statement that aviation was the one industry that was going up in America. According to a detailed study in the May number of *Fortune*, this has indeed been the case. Last year half a million passengers were carried on regularly operating United States air-lines, an increase of more than four thousand over the year before. Airplanes alone among carriers increased their pay loads, the total revenue accruing from their operation in the carrying of mail, passengers and express being $30,000,000. This is, however, as *Fortune* points out lest the airways industry find it hard to come down to earth, "a sum which United States railroads would collect in just three and a half days." It is too early yet to tell how the airplanes are holding up this year in their traffic. There has been, nevertheless, one marked increase, an increase in the matter of speed. This year practically all air-lines are adding new ships which will increase the average air-liner speed from 110 miles per hour to 150-180 miles per hour. In other words, the flyers are stepping up their speeds already over a hundred miles an hour by an additional speed equal to that of the fastest trains or a fast cruising speed for a determined automobile driver. The new ships are futuristic dreams in design with great beauty of structural refinement and simplification. Last year's Big Four that carried over half the passenger traffic and 90 percent of the air mail, are this year reduced to a Big Three through amalgamation:

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the United Air Line, the General Motor's group and the American Airways. Definite plans are now afoot for the intercontinental Pan-American Airways to operate a transatlantic service.

For Teachers of Religion

A MAGAZINE to which we have long meant to call attention is the *Journal of Religious Instruction,* published by laymen and religious at De Paul University, Chicago. Written by experts in the field of Catholic education, it appears monthly during the ten teaching months of the year; and in the three years of its existence it has established standards of zeal, scientific disinterestedness and thoroughness which make it worthy of wide reading and very respectful attention. The current issue illustrates particularly well the range of subjects attacked in the *Journal,* and its admirable approach to them—an approach which consciously and constantly embodies the sounder foundings of modern psychology and pedagogy. From the leading editorial, on devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and how it may be fruitfully presented in Catholic schools, we cull this observation, which sets the tone of so much that is sane and refreshing throughout the periodical: "How is the school promoting a love for Mary? Flower-wreathed shrines and scheduled devotions are not sufficient. In fact, we question the advisability of requiring the presence of students at the rosary or Little Office. While nothing should give the teacher greater joy than a large student attendance at May devotions, he is showing real educational acumen who lets students themselves decide to attend, without pressure or ordinance from the school."

THIS salutary emphasis on the sometimes neglected factors of individual initiative and will, is implicit throughout the issue. Other attitudes of value are suggested in the articles which follow it. The Right Reverend J. M. Wolfe, writing at length upon "Music and Processes of Religious Education" in the elementary school, shows, by a fine combination of the learned and the concrete, how "music awakens answering voices in the nature of children which so much of the other school materials stultify or render dumb," and how not only religious but folk and art singing are absolutely indispensable in the rounded development and emotional sublimation of the child. An article on Blessed Imelda presents to little minds in human and usable terms some helpful and inspiring considerations from the life of the young patroness of First Communicants. Sister Mary Ambrose deals with the theme "My Mass Is Union with Christ" for the upper grades, appending a carefully complete outline of study; and the same theme is presented for the college teacher ("Sacrifice," by the Reverend T. A. Rattler, O.S.A.) in what is perhaps the most valuable, clear and appealing article in the issue—an article that, we venture, even some theologians might peruse to their refreshment. High school students come in for their share in a searching questionnaire by Dr. Ellamay Horan on the main specific topics of religious teachings, as embodied in the great encyclicals. Father Gerald Ellard, S.J., outlines a liturgical course for college students. Religious teachers of public school children are helped by a very fine lesson plan on the mysteries of the rosary. A delicate and straightforward paper deals with "The Commandment of Purity." And, finally, the high school catechist has a paper on the practical application of the Fourth Commandment. The *Journal* is a splendid pioneer in the most important field of all. Everyone who cares about the religious instruction of the young will be helped and heartened by it.

BAD MEN HANG

IF ANY by-product of American life has been discussed, lynching is it. The nation may be guilty of assorted errors and shortcomings, but it does on the whole profess an idealistic faith in civic rights and institutions. News that still another Negro has been dragged to a tree, tortured and hanged fills the average man with disgust, which he is quite willing to express oratorically. But when action is proposed—well, that is a different story entirely. For action presupposes a knowledge of what causes lynching and a determination to get at the root of the problem. Neither is as easy as it seems. We have grown accustomed to thinking that "private law" is a matter which concerns only the South. During recent years, however, many incidents in Northern history approximate lynchings. When gunmen decide to annihilate one another; when the friends of somebody, really or supposedly outraged, band to take revenge; when a neighborhood feud results in an unexplained murder—when these and similar things occur, we know that respect for law is wearing away and that something else has taken its place. We have, therefore, a good deal to learn from the history of lynching proper.

Some years ago, a Southern Commission was organized to study the problem. One result of this is a book, "The Tragedy of Lynching," by Arthur Raper (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press. $5.00). Here are the stories of the twenty-one lynchings which occurred during 1930. Each case is examined in detail, and the reaction of the public is carefully recorded. No such thorough job could be done without a great deal of assistance, which Dr. Raper received. As presented, the book is significant not merely by reason of the evidence offered about lynching itself but also because of the light it throws upon populistic emotions everywhere. In Spain the Jesuit, in Germany the Jew,

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in the United States the Negro! Once certain emotions have been let loose, it is as if a demon were rampant.

One story given in this book contains enough food for thought to last a good while. Down in southeastern Georgia there is a region where poor soil, swamp air and agricultural conditions join to create a type of farming which appeals primarily to Negroes and poor whites. On a January afternoon, 1930, a young white girl went to a nearby farmhouse to deliver a letter which had been placed by mistake in her father's mail-box. Some time later her body, horribly mangled, was found in a puddle beside the road. Suspicion fell upon a young Negro, who is said to have confessed, though the sole evidence against him was that he had happened along in a wagon shortly before the dead girl's body was discovered. He was chased but eluded the pursuer. Thereupon a thousand excited men, aided by bloodhounds, hunted the alleged murderer through the night. The sheriff finally got his man.

On the way to jail, the mob took possession of both sheriff and prisoner. The Negro was led back to the scene of the crime and chained to a tree. Men, women and children—at least a thousand of them—stood round while individuals in the posse began to torture the victim. They cut off his fingers and toes, joint by joint. They pulled out his teeth with pliers. They jabbed him in the face with a sharp pole. Yet not even these acts could appease the sadistic fury of the mob. The still living body was hanged by the arms; and after further tortures, a fire was built, and as the flames shot up dozens of bullets put an end to the Negro's misery. Thus there was enacted a scene of which the human being alone is capable. And it was as if a warning was coming out of Georgia to us all, to bear testimony unto the prowess of the demon that lurks in man when he renounces the control of principles and laws.

We repeat this story primarily because mob vengeance was here dealing with a real and heinous crime rather than, as so often happens, a mirage. There is even good reason for believing that the lynched Negro may have been guilty. Accordingly it was difficult for either the authorities or the press to oppose what had been done. Why make a fuss over someone as vile as this destroyer of a young girl's life? As a result the lynchers received sympathy rather than blame. Even the fact that the sheriff had been fired upon and nearly slain made no impression.

The fact that the majority of those lynched are Negroes is often seen in the wrong light. It is not so much the skin of the black man as his inferiority that counts. He used to be a slave. A sentence in the Bible affords excuse for believing that Negroes were divinely ordained to do chores for white men. Even more to the point is the low state of civilization among Southern darkies—the dirtiness, the ignorance, the shiftlessness and the decadent morals which are the legacies of savagery and slavery. Mobs are merciless toward inferiors. A majority not guided by individuals possessing uncommon devotion to Christian moral standards affords proof for the most pessimistic statements to be found in Schopenhauer.

Why should this be true? The book before us contains two paragraphs which seem eminently significant by reason of the indirect commentary they afford concerning existing civilization. "As to the ownership of property," writes Dr. Raper, "the known active lynchers were generally propertyless. In the majority of cases they were unemployed, rambling, irresponsible people, many of them with court records. In the rural communities, the more shiftless types of white farm tenants and wage hands were most in evidence. Being without property to tax or collect legal damage from, mob members recklessly destroyed property in a number of places. More than one of the Sherman, Texas, rioters remarked when looking at the burning courthouse: 'Let 'er burn down; the taxpayers'll put 'er back.'" It is no doubt this lack of all concrete participation in the wealth and welfare of the community which, the world over, is evoking the spirit of destruction and vengeance. That the lash should be wielded against those who are numerically or socially inferior is a matter of course. The rabble is often reckless, but never brave.

Again Dr. Raper tells us: "The man-hunt provides an opportunity for carrying and flourishing firearms with impunity, a privilege which appeals strongly to the more irresponsible elements. Moreover, man-hunts and lynchings make it possible for obscure and irresponsible people to play the rôles of arresting officers, grand jurors, trial jurors, judges and executioners. An added attraction is that they often afford an avenue of emotional escape from a life so drab and unilluminated that any alternative is welcome." Here we touch upon a mainspring of mob psychology, in any one of its numerous forms. The desire to pull oneself up by the bootstraps of fortune to a place in the sun is one of the major characteristics of all revolutions; and from this point of view every lynching is a revolt.

There are many similar aspects of the problem which cannot fail to impress those interested in the course of social relationships. But these two suffice to establish the conclusion that, while peace and order may be upheld by a system of law competently enforced, anything like permanent sanitation can be secured only by obedience to sound social principle and by intellectual and moral education. While we take due notice of other countries and events, it will be at least equally beneficial to look abroad at home.

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IMMIGRATION

By HERBERT C. PELL

That some curb on immigrations is necessary seems undeniable, says Mr. Pell, who then adds that the present Quota Bill "is about the most nonsensical method ever adopted by any country to achieve a worthy object." This assertion is supported with evidence. Mr. Pell then proceeds to establish a theory of right immigration control, which we invite our readers to consider. The test he proposes amounts virtually to a physical examination, possibly insufficient but also possibly adequate.—The Editors.

WHEN the American democracy has once decided that something must be done about any question at all, it is usually ready to accept the first remedy proposed and to criticize those who offer any alternative scheme as if they were opposing all reform whatsoever. There can be no doubt, for example, that those who suggest that any scheme other than the Volstead Bill might better achieve national sobriety are, in prohibition circles, considered to be advocates of promiscuous drunkenness and that those who believe that public opinion and the common law will in the long run best insure decency on the stage and in the moving pictures are treated as if they were the partners or paid advocates of the lowest merchants of pornography. Our people seem to have no realization that the need of some measure is not an argument in favor of the first remedy that attracts public attention nor have they any apparent realization of the difference between a suggested improvement in the means and a vicious attack on the end desired.

Practically no one in the United States who has given any consideration to the problem of immigration could seriously advocate the return to the policy of the early nineteenth century, when we admitted all comers without examination or thought. We had land; we needed laborers. There was room for all, and all were welcome to the practically boundless opportunities that our country then offered. Everyone recognizes that there has been a change, that we cannot absorb new immigrants as rapidly as we did fifty years ago. There must be some bar set up against the great numbers of people who are desirous of coming to share our diminishing prosperity. Unfortunately, about the time that this fact became impressed on the minds of our people of the United States, an immediate remedy was offered by noisy propagandists inspired primarily by religious intolerance fortified by imaginary science. The result is the present Quota Bill which, with the exception of the Volstead Act, is about the most nonsensical method ever adopted by any country to achieve a worthy object.

A calm and intelligent consideration could very readily have produced a method which would have given us national sobriety without national corruption, and yet we accepted the Volstead Act because a group of sentimentalists succeeded for a time in making the thoughtless majority of the American people believe that opposition to their revolutionary doctrine meant the advocacy of general intoxication. The group headed by the Ku Klux Klan which brought about the Quota Law has prevented any serious consideration of a basic change in our restrictive immigration measures by convincing the electorate that any person advocating any change is an advocate of unrestricted immigration. This is not so.

Congressman Albert Johnson of Washington introduced our present basic laws on the subject of immigration. They provide that a certain number of immigrants shall be admitted to the United States in the proportion which a group of men in New York believe to have been the proportion of immigration prior to the Revolution. This law is based on the theory that the people of the United States are biologically different from the people of other white nations and that these white nations differ biologically among themselves. Their advocates talk as if a man with a French father would not be able to understand the workings of the English system of government, or as if a German or an Italian could not grasp the American point of view. But this pseudo-scientific jargon, which can impose on no serious student of natural history or of biology, is only the window-dressing for the vigorous anti-Catholic drive of the Ku Klux Klan. It is the gross attacks of the *Menace* and not the refined nonsense of these alleged scientists that give force to the movement.

The Nordicists are simply Klansmen wearing silk pajamas instead of cotton nightshirts. They bolster their prejudices with a farrago of allegations. They do not deny that there is a large proportion of black-headed Germans, including by the way the latest "Miss Germany." Long heads, short heads, black heads and yellow heads jostle each other in the streets of every city in Europe and yet these pseudo-scientists talk as if the human race in Europe were divided into radically different species. They must have noticed that even individual couples will produce children of different appearance. This is the observation of everyone. There can hardly be a citizen of the United States who will not find among his own close relations both blondes and brunettes. It is

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perfectly obvious that natural selection among human beings will not produce or maintain a pure breed any more than it will among animals.

There is the tendency to use the term thoroughbred very loosely and to speak of breeding human beings by selection as we breed animals. The great distinction which we are liable to forget is that animals are bred to develop particular qualities and ruthlessly to sacrifice others. A racing horse would make as absurd an appearance at a plow as the Percheron or Shire horse would make on a track; and yet the breeding of the latter goes much farther back than the Godolphin Arabian or the famous Barb. One has been bred for speed and the other for strength; neither could survive the struggle for life on the great plains of America or on the Russian Steppes. Certainly there is not as much distinction between one kind of white European and another as there is between the various Scottish breeds of terrier. The proof of the reality of any breed is the ability to reproduce the type, and this is shown by no European people nor is it shown by any aggregations of Americans.

From a political or social point of view, the first generation immigrant is rarely important. He is usually a poor man and does not attain a degree of prosperity sufficiently great to become a power in the country. Of course, there are exceptions to this rule; but any person who chooses to consider the proportion of foreign-born in "Who's Who," in any of our state legislatures or in the directory of directors will realize that this country is entirely controlled intellectually, financially, politically and socially by native Americans who have been brought up in American surroundings and educated in American schools.

It is not true that those speaking foreign languages were in any way hostile to the United States during the war against Germany, nor is it true that they constitute a serious menace to our institutions. The second generation in practically every case is genuinely American. The loyalty of the great Germanic element in this country during the late war is a proof of that. It is true that a man of French or Italian ancestry may shock the hill-billy by a preference for good wine to bad whisky, but that is the taste of most cultivated people the world over. The sons of Germans may show a greater thoroughness in their studies and a greater respect for learning than the average, but the distinctions between the national stocks in the second generation is practically indistinguishable and by the third, it is wiped out.

We all know plenty of immigrants and their sons and their grandsons, and we all know as a practical fact that their loyalty to the United States is as great as that of any section of the people. It requires almost no demonstration to show that an American citizen whose grandfather was Dutch is neither better nor worse than one whose grandfather was Italian or English. There was hardly a case of a person of German descent working against the United States during the World War, and I see no reason to believe that in a war with Italy or France there would be any greater proportion of unabsorbed citizens. This, after all, rather than a preference for spaghetti or roast beef, is the real test.

There is, however, one thing which most of these immigrants do inherit and that is their religion. Men of German descent who are as vigorously loyal to the United States as anyone could be, usually remain Lutherans or Catholics. Italians will remain Catholic for generations, although we have all run across cases where the grandson or even the son of an Italian immigrant can scarcely speak Italian and does not know from what part of Italy his progenitor came. The more recent immigration has come mainly from the southern, Catholic parts of Europe, and it is religious intolerance and hatred of the Catholics which has inspired a great part of the enthusiasm for the Johnson Bills and which has certainly dictated their form and aroused the rage of the pseudo-biologists in New York.

I was a Member of Congress when the first Johnson Bill was introduced, and it was perfectly apparent that although the inventors of the Nordic race provided the smoke screen behind which the bill was pushed, the real power before which congressmen stampeded like cattle before a storm was religious intolerance. This is obvious from the fact that, although this bill was passed before the treaty of peace was signed with Germany, it provided for a larger immigration from the nation with which we were at war than from the allied nations of France and Italy. The leaders of the Ku Klux Klan knew that Martin Luther was a German, and did not know that Germany was almost half Catholic. Their better-educated partners, the Nordicists, deluded by their own patter, did not enlighten them.

It should be apparent to the meanest intelligence that the proper course for this country, once it is decided to limit immigration to a given number, is to pick from among the applicants those individuals who are most likely to produce a healthy and intelligent offspring.

The selection of this class is a matter which should take considerable study, since there are more people desirous of entering the United States than we can possibly absorb with profit to ourselves. It is absurd to admit feeble and undersized cockneys, simply because they come from a Protestant nation and to refuse the healthy, strong and willing workers from Austria. Nor is it intelligent to admit practically all of the applicants from one country and not one in fifty from another. It is silly that a man born in Belgium should not be admitted to the United States until

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his application has been on file for several years, while another man born a few miles off in France is able to come in as soon as he signs his name to the proper papers. If this situation is considered with ordinary intelligence and without prejudice, it is perfectly clear that neither religion nor nationality should be considered but those traits best suited to our needs should determine an applicant's eligibility.

The political menace simply does not exist. It is a boojum raised by cynical politicians anxious to continue in office, by irresponsible and consciousless demagogues ready to appeal to any ignorant prejudice if that will help them to retain public place. Such is the type of man who speaks of this danger. As a matter of fact, the vast body of immigrants have almost no direct political influence, and even in the second generation their power is less than their proportion to the population.

In 1929 I looked through the Citizens Union list of candidates in New York City which of course has a very large number of foreign-born citizens. Of the candidates born in the city of New York, 77 were Republicans and 98 Democrats. Of those born in the United States outside of the city of New York, 27 were Republicans and 17 Democrats. Of the foreign born, 30 were Republicans and 11 Democrats. It does not seem to me that the Democratic party with only 11 foreign born as against 115 natives is exactly in the hands of the foreigners, or even that the Republicans with 30 to 99 are in any serious danger of the fate which many seem to fear. (The slight discrepancies in the figures noted come from the fact that three or four candidates did not report their place of birth, and one, a Democrat, was born at sea.)

The economic danger, however, is a thing which we must consider very seriously. There can be no doubt that the United States in twenty years will be able to support many more people than it does today; just as today it supports many more people than it did in 1900. But the accumulation of inhabitants more rapidly than we can find jobs for them works great harm to the American people as a whole. The admission to the United States of even a small number of laborers beyond the need for them would very seriously depress the condition of the great laboring mass of the country. This is obviously a thing against which we should protect ourselves; but the process of protection should be sane and we should select intelligently from among those who are desirous of entering the United States the ones who will be most likely to prove useful by their own labor and by the quality of their progeny. It would not be a wise thing to admit large numbers of competitors for those industries most suffering from unemployment, but other industries where hands are lacking would be well served by the admission of new labor.

The selection of suitable candidates for citizenship is difficult but not impossible. I do not believe an intelligence test could be devised which would be of any real use, since it must be given those of different ages, different training and different nationality, and especially when one considers that the nation's concern is not only with the immigrants themselves but with their descendants.

I suggest therefore that, having barred lunatics and mental deficients, we should confine ourselves to a physical test and admit all those applicants able to pass examination. Of course, I recognize that certain very valuable men might be kept out and that others of extremely little use would be admitted. But, on the whole, I think that we would gain more and lose less by such a method of selection than by any other. Physical qualities are more certainly and regularly transmitted to descendants and are much more easily measurable than are mental and moral characteristics, and it is practically certain that among the healthy there is a higher level of moral and mental excellence.

It is undoubtedly true that the weakest and least healthy third of our population has given us far less than a third of our successful men. It is certainly true that the children and grandchildren of physically strong and healthy people will have a very much greater chance of success and usefulness than will the descendants of the weak and feeble. Moreover, it is comparatively easy to test health and strength. Men may be physically measured with great accuracy. The results of mental tests can never be more than approximate; and moral tests are practically impossible. We may be sure that the grandchildren of people who have passed a rigid physical test will as a group develop into good citizens.

My first suggestion would be to admit anyone who could pass the test required for admission to the United States Army; and if after a short time we found that this was letting in too many immigrants, we could very easily jack up the standard until the number was reduced to the extent desired. It is perfectly obvious that these examinations could be made; admitting as many or as few people as might appear desirable at the moment.

If any person were hiring men to work on a particular private job, he would unquestionably adopt some such method. Why would it not be a good thing for the general public? Is it conceivable that any contractor, or builder, any big farmer, railroad executive or bank president would refuse a strong and healthy man and accept a weak one because of national or religious prejudices? If any individual did follow this policy, how long would his business last if he were in business for himself and how long would his job last if he were an employee?

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A NOTE ON THE BOURGEOIS WORLD

By JACQUES MARITAIN

THE VERY idea of a bond between Christianity and the bourgeois or capitalist world is paradoxical. Many of our contemporaries may believe in all good faith the most effective platitude of atheist propaganda, that religion and the Church are bound up with the defense of the interests of a single class and the "eminent dignity" of capitalism, militarism, etc.; this simply shows good faith is not necessarily intelligence, and that men's opinions move among shadows where the appearances of things are turned upside down.

The world born of the two great movements of the Renaissance and the Reformation has plainly anti-Catholic spiritual and cultural dominants: it has persecuted Catholicism every time it could freely follow its instincts; its philosophy is utilitarian, materialist, or hypocritically idealist; its politics Machiavellian, its economics liberal and mechanist. The fathers of the bourgeois world are not the Fathers of the Church whether they are sought with Max Weber on the side of Calvin or with M. Seillière on the side of Rousseau, not forgetting the Cartesian Angel of clear ideas. This world was born of the great movement of heart toward the holy possession of earthly goods which is at the origin of economic capitalism, mercantilism and industrialism as it is of philosophical naturalism and rationalism. The Church's condemnations of usury at the threshold of modern times remain as a burning interrogation of the legitimacy of the economics of these times.

The Church is in the world but not of it. If she induces men to show themselves faithful to social forms tested by time, she does so not because she is attached to one or another of these forms but rather because she knows that the stability of laws is a good of the multitude; yet in the course of history the Church has constantly shown she does not fear political and social renovations, and has an understanding especially free from illusions about the contingency of human things. The Church teaches obedience to temporal authorities and just laws because all legitimate authority of man over man comes from God, and with the exception of a temporal power having a ministerial rôle in regard to the spiritual as was the case of the empire in the middle ages, the Church does not institute temporal authorities but sanctions those present without prohibiting attempts to change them or to resist a tyrannical power by force if necessary. The better to procure the salvation of souls and dispose governments to respect the finalities of their own nature, the Church tries to agree with the secular power. Nor does she ignore that dealing with this power is nearly always somewhat like dealing with the devil, because a world turned from God is subject to a prince who is not God *(totus in malignus positus est mundus)*. And, after all, one devil is as bad as another; the mere endurance of one is sufficient to eclipse the rights of a supplanted one. The Catholic Church may have spent so much time accommodating herself to the bourgeois world because the mediaeval régime formed under her protection continued to occupy her memory as it did her tutelary cares for such a long time, and if I remember correctly the Church is reproached for this in a volume by M. Groethuysen; but the Church was never bound to this system, and whatever the persecutions to which she may be exposed by succeeding ones (she is used to them, *supra dorsum meum fabricaverunt pecatores)* it can well be believed she will not very much regret its passing. The Church is perfectly free in its regard.

To understand the paradox of how religion could be considered bound in its principles to the "bourgeois" or "capitalist" civilization it is necessary to penetrate a world of appearances and confusions; as I have pointed out in other essays, this absurd belief has its origin in fundamental confusions between the Church and the Christian world, or between the Catholic religion and the social behavior of average Catholics belonging to the ruling classes, or more definitively, between the spiritual and temporal orders. The Church as such holds the promises of eternal life, and the prince of this world has no part in her; he has his part however in the Christian world.

The Christian world born of the decomposition of mediaeval Christendom gave its consent to many iniquities, and by that I mean a kind of collective historical falling away in regard to which tracing individual responsibility would have hardly any meaning. God in permitting this world to sink of its own dead weight is preparing the rise of another.

The mission of a Léon Bloy was to announce these things and cry them from the house-tops. It is strange to observe how admissions of this kind seem somehow indecent to Christians of today; it seems they fear to embarrass apologetics and prefer to lay the blame on the machinations of evil-doers and regard history Manichean-wise, as if evil-doers are not dependent on the government of God but only on that of the devil. The Hebrews of old and even the Ninevites made no such pretensions.

The falling away I mean, which concerns primarily the social order, or rather the spiritual in-

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carnated in the social, is the failure of a social or cultural mass taken in its (imperfect) unity, in its collective structures and "objective spirit" rather than in a series of individuals taken singly; it is the falling away of a civilization Christian in name, and all of us in so far as we are involved in this civilization. Nicholas Berdyaev has said some important truths on this matter which need not be repeated here. Rather should an attempt be made to see what are the reasons for this historical fact.

The first reason is quite general. It derives from the universal truth that evil is more frequent than good in the human species. Hence it is natural that there be more "bad Christians" than "good Christians" in a Christian civilization and especially in the dominant places (more exposed to that very fact) of this civilization. The moment this civilization loses its proper spirit and the structures bound up with it, as befell Christendom at the time of the Renaissance and the Reformation, another collective spirit will be born in it heavier and darker the more removed it is from the vital center of the Faith and the Church. In this way we reach the "naturization" of religion and the deist or atheist (they are practically the same) use of Christianity for temporal ends. The theme "religion is good for the people" made much headway during the despotism of the enlightenment, and it seems to have had a political destiny (for the profit of the prince) before it had an economic destiny (for the benefit of the rich). "This system of the marvellous seems decidedly made for the people," Frederick II wrote; and further: "I do not know who can solve the problem whether it is right to deceive men. I shall have this matter arranged." The Academy of Berlin brought up this problem at its meeting of 1780. "My answer to this question," responded Johann-Friedrich Gillet, "is assuredly, yes! for important and sufficient reasons to my way of thinking: the people are the people, they will remain the people eternally, and must remain so; furthermore, the history of all times, our own included, proves by hundreds of examples that being deceived the people and their leaders are indeed happy. . . ."

The historical falling away has other causes more particular and of more immediate interest which should be indicated here in however imperfect a manner.

In mediaeval Christianity civilization was orientated almost unconsciously and by the spontaneous instinct of faith, *in utero ecclesiae* as it were, toward a realization of the Gospels not only in the life of souls but also in the social-temporal order. When with the "age of self-consciousness" the internal differentiation of culture became the preponderant process, and art, science, philosophy and the state each began to be aware of itself (what fierce awareness), it would not be inexact to say a like awareness of the social domain and the proper reality it constitutes did not come about. And how could this have possibly come about in a world which was to grow up under the Cartesian sign?

Thus in the course of modern generations the instinct of Christian love tried to remedy the injustices and defects of the social machine by admirable initiatives of spiritual and corporal mercy; yet seemingly it may be said an instrument of a philosophical and cultural order, an awareness, a "discovery" about temporal reality and the earthly life of man, were lacking to the Christian intelligence by which to judge speculatively and practically—against the current of history, moreover, for the period in question was one of the dissolutions of Christendom—the things of economic and social life from the point of view of the social-temporal realization of the Gospels. During this time not the Gospel spirit was lacking the alive and saintly groups of the Christian world, but a sufficiently explicit awareness of one of the fields of reality to which this spirit should be applied. Excessive as may be Auguste Comte's pretension of having discovered social science, it may be said that the "scientific" illusions of sociologism as well as those of Socialism have worked for the children of light by forcing upon them the conscious discovery of this field of reality.

These considerations show more clearly that the cultural state of Christian peoples is still very backward in regard to the social possibilities of Christianity and the full awareness of what the Gospel law demands of the temporal structures of the state. They also help us understand how good and pious souls who put into practice Christian maxims in their private lives and in the relations of one individual with another, suddenly seem to change plan and follow the maxims of naturalism when confronted with this special order of relations, this moral reality *sui generis* which depends on the social as such. Finally these considerations may help explain how even though at the beginning many questions concerning individual conscience and the confessional were raised in the Christian mind by the transformation which substituted little by little the system of capitalism and loan interest for that of mediaeval economics, still this system was not considered and judged by that mind (educated besides in a Cartesian manner) from the point of view of its proper social significance and value. In this way while meeting the passive resistance and dull hostility of Catholic social formations, the capitalist system was able to install itself in the modern world without provoking active, deliberate and effective opposition on the part of the Christian world or the Christian temporal order, even that of Catholics.

Nevertheless, it should be remarked, the protest of Catholic conscience did not fail to make itself

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heard. In the nineteenth century in particular, even at a time when capitalism reached maturity and took possession of the world, some men raised a voice, an Ozanam, a Vogelsang, a La Tour du Pin. The Church especially made up for the failings of the Christian world by formulating the higher truths and principles ruling the whole of economic matters, principles largely disregarded by the régime of modern peoples. Such was the doctrinal work of Leo XIII in this domain which today is being carried forward by Pius XI. Pontifical interventions and Catholic activities brought about and directed by them have already greatly influenced legislation and the public spirit.

Now we are actually assisting at a historical event of considerable importance: what may be called the Christian diaspora—I mean the temporal Christian family or collectivity scattered among the nations, the Christian laity if you will —is beginning to have an explicit, conscious, deliberate awareness both of its own cultural mission and the proper reality of the social world as such. And the moment the Church, having triumphed over the crises of the first half of the nineteenth century when she fought for life and freedom, takes in hand again Christian intellectuality, this awareness in our opinion will become more and more directed against capitalist materialism, as much as against Communist materialism which is only its consequence. If we consider how the laborious and discordant efforts of nineteenth-century religious thought could magnificently affirm the truths it did, despite the inconveniences suffered from lack of sufficiently high philosophical and theological lights, then may we well believe one of the tasks to which our epoch is called is reconciling the vision of a Joseph de Maistre and a Lamennais in the higher unity of the great wisdom of which Saint Thomas is the herald.

A second instalment of this article will appear next week.

NEW YORK CENTRAL

By JOHN LEEDS KERR

THE SEVENTEEN miles of the original Mohawk and Hudson, chartered in 1826, represented a costly project measured in relative business values of the period in contrast to present conditions. At that time few could have foreseen a heavy locomotive thundering down the Hudson River Valley at an average speed of sixty miles an hour, drawing modern de luxe passenger equipment over one of the finest roadways in the world. Neither could they have dared think of the magnitude of the present capitalization or the prosperous earnings of the present New York Central system during the boom era, for this would have defied even the most visionary and imaginative person.

Any survey of the New York Central or of the entire railroad problem itself must take into consideration the various opinions and beliefs of the large number of separate groups concerned. Within the railroad itself the viewpoints of railway managers and railway workmen represent opposite extremes. This is also true with respect to shippers, investors, bankers, tax paying communities and state and national regulatory bodies. For this reason the doctrine of public interest is paramount, but this does not mean that the policies of the Interstate Commerce Commission, which have always been predicated on the welfare of the people, have definitely proved so in actual practice.

The basic problem of the railroad is preëminent at all times. This is the question of railway credit and each of the groups enumerated above are primarily concerned with the stability of railway finance. Railway credit is not a problem resulting from the present business depression. It is a problem which the nation has never solved and never will solve until sound fundamentals are injected into our national transportation laws and strong measures are taken to maintain it after it has once been firmly established.

It is widely recognized that the first tangible signs of New York Central's difficulties were revealed during the initial financial stage of the 1930-1933 depression. It is during such a period that railroad receiverships usually eventuate. Central's resistance to recurrent waves of nation-wide railroad bankruptcy is one of particular interest, and a review of receivership history will perhaps clarify the financial position of the company from its inception to the present.

Prior to the Civil War most of the railroads were fragmentary and discordant segments with heterogeneous relation to each other. There were numerous bankruptcies as an aftermath of the panic of 1837, but since there were no large systems there were no important reorganizations. The amalgamations of many of these small bankrupt units formed the nucleus for the larger railroads which were to fail by scores in subsequent years of depression.

In the depression period of the seventies almost the entire nation was still in the first stages of development, with the exception of the Eastern section served by the New York Central and the Pennsylvania. It is therefore easily perceived that the funded debt of these railroads did not

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expand in advance of the actual earning possibilities of the territory served. On the other hand, many Western transcontinentals needed subsidies, land grants and government assistance in order to reach their objectives, and even then all of them failed with the exception of the Great Northern and the Southern Pacific.

During the nineties the foregoing conditions also prevailed, but Central's development reached a fully matured state during the first quarter of the twentieth century. A flattening in traffic expansion was first noted in the territory served by Central's New England line, the Boston and Albany. The Big Four was the next, but these factors were obscured by the tremendous automobile expansion which benefited the entire New York Central system during the prosperous period which prevailed between 1925-1930. Then, too, although expansion in gross was not remarkable during the last decade, the tremendous upturn in net operating railway income also distorted the picture and made it appear more favorable than the realties of the case indicated as actualities.

The panics and depressions, which have always been recurrent in the United States throughout the entire history of the country, failed to injure the premier railroad of the Empire State until the fatal decline of the thirties. In 1857, when most railroads were bankrupt, the road paid out large dividends. In the railroad receivership depression of the seventies, the company emerged unscathed and its stock continued as a desirable investment. The strongest railroads in the country failed during the troublous and harrowing years between 1873-1877 and 1893-1897. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe, through voluntary readjustments and drastic reorganization, finally emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century with renewed strength. In fact, the reduction accomplished in 1896 explains the present credit position of the carrier today, after more than three years of industrial stagnation. Union Pacific also failed twice during this period, before the company achieved fame under the sponsorship of E. H. Harriman, but, throughout these depressions, the New York Central experienced little difficulty.

Before the far-reaching decline in traffic and business activity of the 1930-1933 depresion, the New York Central was considered the bulwark of financial security. It is perhaps a matter of grave concern that the premier railroad of the Eastern territory should reach its present deplorable state in such a short period of time. The ravages of three years of trade and industrial stagnation were in part responsible, but there were other definite reasons for impaired strength of credit of the corporation and the drastic decline of its securities in the markets. First, consider the preëminent position of the road at the end of the Coolidge-Hoover bull swing.

New York Central's traffic returns reflect the position of the steel industry. The great steel and iron producing centers, Buffalo, Erie, Cleveland, Lorain, Toledo, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Gary and Chicago, all are reached by New York Central's lines. During a period of normal traffic, the company hauls about ten million tons of iron ore to the blast furnaces and an equivalent amount of steel products away from them. Through its subsidiary, the Michigan Central, the company originates a large traffic in automobiles and accessories. Two-thirds of all the automobiles manufactured in the United States are produced in cities served by New York Central's lines.

Along the line of the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie, another of the road's major subsidiaries, lie some of the richest coal deposits and the largest steel plants and furnaces in the United States. Its traffic consists of such ores as come from the lake district to Pittsburgh and its northbound movement consists largely of coal and finished steel and iron products.

A connection is effected with the Western Maryland at the southern terminus of the Pittsburgh line at Connellsville, but the complete development of interchange traffic with this carrier has been retarded for several years owing to competition with the Baltimore and Ohio, which naturally favors its own route between Pittsburgh and Baltimore rather than that of the Western Maryland which it controls. The traffic volume of the company is extremely sensitive to the relative degree of prosperity reflected by the out-turn from the coal and steel industries in the territory. Pittsburgh and Lake Erie has the distinction of enjoying the greatest traffic density of any other road in the country and its gross revenues, net revenues and net income per mile are larger than any other railroad in the United States.

For years Central's subsidiary, the Kanawha and Michigan, was in striking distance across the river from the northern terminus of the Virginian Railway at Deepwater, Virginia. In March, 1931, the Virginian completed the construction of the bridge across the Kanawha River and a new traffic artery between the Middle West and the Southeast was established. The new route gave New York Central a more direct connection with Southeastern points, and the new connection placed the New York Central on Chesapeake Bay for the first time, in competition with the three other major trunk lines. Formerly the New York Central interchanged traffic at Cincinnati and Columbus, and by this change the road received a considerably longer haul and a more direct route in addition.

The physical condition of New York Central has been maintained at a very high standard for many years. Large sums have been returned to the property for various improvements such as

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electrification in the New York suburban area, construction of the Castleton Cut-off, expenditures for automatic train control, and various other projects. Funds have been provided for the most part to take care of these additions from earnings as well as from the sale of stocks, but in the boom years prior to 1930 the company depended upon earnings for the necessary funds to continue contemplated improvements.

Very few people realize that after the creation of an excellent railway property, meeting the highest standards known to the industry, it is necessary to protect the investment through proper charges for maintenance. In periods of contracted earning power, work on the property is unusually deferred. This means that the funds normally available for the common stock during the next year might be needed for maintenance and betterment. Deferred maintenance accumulated at a rapid rate during the 1930-1933 period of decline in traffic and earnings, and this back log of work must soon be liquidated if safe operations are to continue.

The success or failure of any business enterprise in the long run is determined by its income account. A railroad may provide good transportation service under wise and careful management, and yet because of unfavorable conditions in its territory, inadequate rates or some other combination of causes fail to convert a sufficient proportion of net after expenses and taxes to meet its fixed charges. Small corporations in most cases find it easier to exercise control over operating expenses than those of greater size and importance. Consequently, the Greater New York Central System after the inclusion of the Big Four and the Michigan Central was faced with exceedingly difficult problems in this respect, and the protracted period of business recession experienced between 1930-1933 proved an additional handicap.

As already stated the road, unlike Atchison or Union Pacific, never experienced reorganization. When recession in earnings started, the funded debt of the company represented the accumulated capital additions to property from its inception. Although undercapitalized in relation to investment in this property, the road was obviously overcapitalized in relation to what the public was prepared to pay for freight service. The consolidation of the Big Four, Michigan Central and other subsidiaries in 1930 was responsible for a large increase in fixed charges and this was to prove an additional handicap.

Even with a major earnings recession such as the road experienced during 1930, few investors were willing to take a definitely bearish attitude toward the stock. Actual earnings in 1930 failed by a slight margin to cover the dividend on the stock and final results were disappointing. Reasons for believing that the stock was still selling rather high in relation to earnings was, of course, obvious. In retrogressing, it was evident that between the years 1919 and 1930 the stock had a price range between a low of 64 in 1920 and 1921 and a high of 256 in 1929.

The road suffered severely from the sharp decline in Michigan Central, and the absorption of the Big Four and Michigan Central did not result in any economies of importance. At least the consolidation economies first predicted were not achieved. Moreover, the company was faced with the problem of spending large sums for elevating tracks on the west side of Manhattan. Competition had constantly increased for trunk line traffic with Pennsylvania and Baltimore and Ohio, and Canadian traffic had fallen off, not only because of the Smoot-Hawley tariff, but also owing to trade conditions within the dominion.

New York Central's capitalization was vastly improved in the 1920-1930 decade. In 1920 funded debt accounted for 77 percent of the entire capitalization. Frequent financing through the medium of increased common stock outstanding has changed the capitalization so that funded debt in 1930 amounted to only approximately 56 percent of the total capitalization, and further improvement in the ratio of bonds to stock appeared likely when business conditions were again favorable. All of this would furnish some grounds for optimism if the traffic decline had been arrested.

At the close of 1932 New York Central had reached a precarious financial position. Its floating debt had increased to roughly $90,000,000, and earnings had dropped so precipitously that funds available for charges were deficient to the extent of 20 percent. Maturities due within two years, as well as large funded debt, deferred equipment maintenance and accumulated track maintenance presaged serious future refunding operations to involve almost $200,000,000.

The morale of the workers was also lowered and the severity of the entire situation was reflected by an attitude of resignation on the part of the management, shippers and investors. Throughout the entire year press releases and published information concerning the Central were particularly optimistic. In December the *Evening Post* assured the public that the road was not a heavy borrower from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, and that no serious difficulties were imminent. Perhaps the journalist who wrote the article considered a $24,000,000 debt to the R. F. C. and a $64,000,000 debt to the banks insignificant.

Then the severe pressure exerted against the stock created more or less of a panic among large investors. The specialist on the floor stated that at times offerings increased with such momentum

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that it was almost impractical to maintain a market for the shares. Bear drives on the stock had sent the shares to a low of around 9 in June and to about 14 in December. The junior bonds of the company also sold off sharply, and this had a depressing influence on even the choicest mortgages of the system. Threats of receivership were ominous during the entire year, but public recognition was not evident until the wave of selling eventuated during November and December.

Early in 1933 various amendments to the bankruptcy act were proposed in order to facilitate railroad reorganization, and make it more difficult for lawyers and bankers to receive large fees in connection with the complexities of receivership and financial readjustment. The critical condition of the New York Central at this time only served to direct attention to the plight of all railroads. Most people had forgotten that there was such a thing as the railroad problem.

For the first time in many years it was realized that the railroads were overcapitalized in relation to existing and early future service demands. Obviously, any business so capitalized that fixed charges exceeded available earning power in periods of depression is threatened with insolvency. A strong financial position built up in relatively prosperous periods and highly maintained through conservative managerial policies may serve to avert a financial crisis for a considerable period of unprofitable operation, but if business stagnation endures long enough capital readjustment is inevitable.

With the foregoing facts apparent, serious students of the situation were perhaps more amused than shocked when the papers announced the purchase of roughly 500,000 shares of New York Central by L. F. Loree of the Delaware and Hudson Company. It was well known that Loree's profit in 1929 on the sale of the Lehigh Valley and Wabash stocks to the Pennsylvania was due to the latter's influence in forcing him out of the picture rather than voluntary liquidation on his part owing to foreknowledge that a decline in the market was imminent. In other words, if he could have held the stock he would still own it today.

Evidently Loree was more concerned with the dependence of his Delaware and Hudson on anthracite coal traffic and the need of an enlarged system to correct this than in the cost of fulfilling his long cherished dreams. Moreover, all of his recent consolidation and construction projects were prompted by the same problem of making the Delaware and Hudson more than a coal road. His acquisition of Central shares came just after Union Pacific had liquidated sizable blocks of stocks in favor of a similar investment in Pennsylvania Railroad common.

Loree may profit from New York Central by building a greater system composed of the Lackawanna, New York Central and Delaware and Hudson, and force the bondholders to make some sacrifice, and this debt reduction is imperative if the road is to operate profitably. Due to the size and vast financial importance of the company, Loree and other important interests may have found some way to save the New York Central at any cost through the R.F.C., but it would take many years to develop any earning power to support the excess debt which would continue to expand. The prospect of some sort of financial readjustment must be faced in coming years.

Receiverships have much in their favor and bankruptcy for the New York Central would not prove as disastrous as most people imagine. Since a majority of the railroads facing bankruptcy are in need of all types of supplies in order to replenish needed inventories, receivership and the benefit derived by eliminating the necessity of meeting fixed interest charges makes it possible for the railroads to buy supplies and liquidate the substantial backlog of deferred maintenance which usually has resulted. When the railroads start buying, it means orders of steel, lumber and miscellaneous supplies. Raw materials begin to move to the markets. Men are employed, the purchasing power of the people is gradually restored and inventories are replenished by merchants and manufacturers. Such improvement normally takes between two and four years, and for this reason any plan of reorganization is postponed until the security markets can readily absorb new issues of securities. The new amendments to the existing bankruptcy laws provide a painless method for paring down debt structures. The final outcome with respect to New York Central's financial structure will be awaited with interest.

Truant

Why are you, Spring, so very shy this year?
That you have come again, full well I know!
Today I found a violet in the grass
Where your slim, naked feet are wont to pass
In the gay chasing of your ancient foe.

A jonquil blows his trumpet. Here and there,
Blue flags and yellow flutter in the breeze;
Your couriers, too, these tangy winds, all new
That prick us in the face, they're sweet with you,
And tell your secrets to the wooing trees.

Ah, Spring, why camouflage, you truant nymph,
When lisping leaves and rippling rains are in?
From out the secret places show your face,
And bid your thousand virgins fill the place
With bloom and perfume, rout and merry din:

Ho, Spring is coming in! Sweet Spring is in!

R. C. W.

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CONFIDENCES OF A LECTURER

By MARY ELLEN CHASE

I WRITE these words on a bitter January night in the railway station of a junction of northern New England. The clock says eleven-forty-five. I am alone, having declined the station master's generous offer of the warmth and shelter of his kitchen fire until the down-train at two-fifteen. He looked at me dubiously enough as he completed his preparations for leaving: locking his cash drawer, buttoning the collar of his striped mackinaw high about his grizzly face, pulling down with a bang the opaque glass of his ticket window. But he has respected my desires, lingering only to assure me that the yard-man will at midnight replenish the fire in the hideous, corrugated stove, set in the exact center of the dingy waiting-room. I think a shrewd glance at my laden briefcase has convinced him of a temper alien to his own; and he doubtless possesses that innate respect for other minds which is still common to the native and rural New Englander.

I have been wandering aimlessly and happily about the musty little room which smells of heat, lunch-boxes and dust-bins. Never has solitude seemed at once so exhilarating and so beneficent. My joy therein brings to mind Lord Bacon's dictum that whoever is delighted with solitude is either a beast or a god; and with no pangs of conscience whatsoever I admit that bestial qualities have been with me for lo! these many hours. But now, I tell myself, I am free! There is no one to speak to me, to ask a question, to present a hackneyed compliment, to expect a comment. Even the reading provided by the waiting-room interests my emancipated mind. I have learned that one can go to Montreal, experience for a full day the "feel" of being under another flag, and return for $5.00, coaches only; that it is entirely at one's own risk if one steps on or off a moving train; that the army and the navy both need and will liberally educate virile young men; that the fish and game laws of the state are strictly enforced; that smoking is positively forbidden.

I have walked up and down the platform in the clear, sharp cold, scanned the uneven ridges of snow on each side of the two lines of track, which north and south alike stretch away into black pines and firs, watched the last few lights go out in the few houses east and west. I have looked up at the stars which were never more brilliant, red Aldebaran, the sparkling points of Sirius, Orion on his calm, eternal journey. So distinct are the Pleiades that it is easy to imagine the presence of the lost Electra, forgetful of her shame, among her six fair sisters. Looking skyward, I have repeated more than once Matthew Arnold's lines explanatory of the peace of the heavenly bodies in contrast to the fret of our earthly ones:

> Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
> Undistracted by the sights they see,
> These demand not that the world without them
> Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.

And with some humor for the overearnestness of the Victorian poet, I have nevertheless fervently wished that Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Schwartz, Mrs. Rosenstein and Miss Sullivan of the town I have just left and of half the towns and cities of the United States might in some manner become imbued with even a minimum of his philosophy.

Now, driven inside by the cold and with two hours more to wait until the down-train offers me five uneasy hours before dawn, I prop my briefcase on my knees, draw out some paper, and prepare to amuse myself at least by sharing certain confidences on the matter of lecturing before all clubs in general and before women's clubs in particular.

I would say at the outset that I am a strong adherent of clubs for women. Not alone for the modest checks which substantially help to make possible a summer in Europe, do I year after year on days and weeks free from college teaching journey by bus and train and the automobile of some philanthropic member hither and yon, near and far, to speak before them on some subject of their choice. In a world where so little is certain I like their assurance (in most cases accurate) that they are bettering the common weal, that they disseminate sweetness and light in their respective neighborhoods. I like the energy with which Mrs. Brown tackles a wholly unfamiliar subject and prepares a paper thereon, with which Mrs. Schwartz interviews the mayor or the selectmen or the chairman of the local Red Cross concerning needy families, or Free Milk Distribution, or municipal Christmas trees. I have not the slightest doubt that Mrs. Rosenstein's supper table presents a more lively scene, is possessed of a higher tone than usual when she retails to her husband and children the things she has heard (and some she has not) from a visiting professor or poet or musician. I like the knowledge that women in small towns and rural districts are afforded means of escape from darning-baskets and cake-bowls. And from wide experience I know full well that there is no women's club without here and there a member whose real though thwarted and undeveloped potentialities receive therefrom a nourishment which otherwise they must forego. And yet at the present moment so keen is the consciousness of the ills I have suf-

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fered from these organizations that the benefits I have received seem slight in comparison.

In Hazlitt's essay on the "Conversation of Authors" he reminds his readers that although an author is "bound to write, well or ill, wisely or foolishly" since it is his trade, he is not bound to talk. In like manner I would remind Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Schwartz, Mrs. Rosenstein and Miss Sullivan that, although a lecturer is bound to lecture, he, or she, is not bound to view the parks, lakes and public buildings of the town to which he is invited, to meet the town lions, to give his opinions on current politics (unless that is the subject of his lecture), to be entertained the night preceding or the night following his lecture in the bosom of what the president of the club considers its best family, to give free advice on the education or the training of the children therein, and above all else to eat in public. Lecturing is after all no sinecure. Words do not flow unbidden and unprepared for from the lips of most speakers. And it is quite safe to say that the faltering and disappointing accents of many a lecturer can be traced directly or indirectly to the many rôles he has been called upon to play before once he begins upon what is in reality his sole business.

The town I have just left has afforded me the typical experience of many a lecturer. I was invited for an afternoon lecture before the Women's Club, president, Mrs. Brown, chairman of the entertainment committee, Mrs. Schwartz. I arrived at noon after a tiring train journey of some two hundred miles to be met at the station by both ladies who professed themselves delighted to meet me. I was at once conveyed to a waiting automobile owned by Mrs. Schwartz and driven, not to a hotel where I might rest, bathe, enjoy alone a peaceful, undisturbed hour, where I and every other truthful lecturer would prefer to go even at his own expense, but rather on a talkative tour through the main and chief residence streets of the town. I was shown the public library, the First Congregational Church, the new skating rink, the dog fountain; I was given statistics as to the size, the cost and the overhead of the new Y.M.C.A. And worst of all I was expected to express admiration, ask eager questions, compare these objects favorably with those of other towns I had visited.

At one o'clock we dropped Mrs. Brown before her more modest dwelling and proceeded to the home of Mrs. Schwartz, where I was escorted to the spare room and informed that luncheon would be ready immediately. At luncheon I met and strove to find congenial topics of conversation with Mr. Schwartz, a successful manager of the town gas-works, while Mrs. Schwartz weakly and vainly attempted to inculcate unaccustomed reserve into her four children. Luncheon over, I listened to "Apple Blossom Time" badly played by Miss Mary Elizabeth Schwartz, admired Barbara Jane Schwartz's labors in handicraft, and tried to foster a spirit of camaraderie between Frederick Schwartz, jr., and his father, who were disputing the merits of various colleges. Three o'clock marked the reappearance of Mrs. Brown who warned us that the lecture was at three-thirty. On the way to the hall my advice was asked as an authority upon what course Mrs. Brown should take with her twin sons who, in spite of her, preferred the "Rover Boys" to "Treasure Island" and "The Little Lame Prince."

Let the lecture pass without comment. Suffice it is to say it would have been better had better sense dictated the preceding events. Immediately I had descended the platform, the ladies of Mrs. Schwartz's entertainment committee took me ably in hand. Tea appeared. Coffee also. Open and closed sandwiches, small cakes, decorated with pink roses, ladyfingers, macaroons, brownies, salted nuts, chocolate peppermints.

Veritably, eating is the major curse visited upon the lecturer, who almost never escapes tea and rarely is allowed to come without the gift of a luncheon or to leave without a dinner. Luncheons for afternoon lecturers are particularly trying. Can it never be borne in upon the consciousness of entertainment committees that the one thing a lecturer does not want to do is to eat a large luncheon before he speaks?

Moreover, the breaking of bread invariably means to women's clubs as to the early Christians the opportunity for conversation in which the lecturer must take the lead, become, no matter how exhausted, the animated center. From a seat at the head of the table one must discourse tactfully and in the liveliest manner on the latest books, the Parent-Teachers' Association, the progressive school; one must recall bright anecdotes, stories with point; one must show the keenest interest in all local and civic affairs.

There is a lady in the state of Ohio who cherishes an ill-founded grudge against me because of a reply I made last year to her question regarding my fee for addressing her club. I wrote as politely as possible that my charge was $75.00 if I might be allowed to remain unfed; if, however, I were fed, I should be obliged to raise my fee to $100. To me, my letter seemed both reasonable and courteous; to her it was ununderstandable and insulting as she informed me by return mail in a denunciation which summarily robbed me forever both of the $75.00 and of the keys to her city!

But to return to the entertainment committee ably headed by Mrs. Schwartz. This, unfortunately for me, is the month of the annual club dinner at which my presence is not only expected but rendered almost unavoidable because of the ten o'clock departure of the one train. Again I am driven to the Schwartz residence, this time accompanied by several ladies who wish advice as

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to book-buying for the town library. Arriving at last, weary beyond words, in Mrs. Schwartz's guest-room, I am told there is an hour to spare before I must dress. Ah, that single hour! How many times has my life been saved thereby!

Let me draw a veil over the annual dinner in the dining-hall of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks—over the cream of tomato soup, the fried chicken, the thousand island dressing, the ice-cream pie—over my own jaded conversation whipped to every utterance. A doctor once told me that in periods of mental and emotional stress certain glands poured adrenalin into the blood stream and that this substance was the cause of excessive fatigue. All through the dinner I visualized myself as a vast conduit of adrenalin and saw with every story I must tell, every opinion I must utter, the tributary streams of my arteries ever adding to the flood!

Mrs. Schwartz herself drove me, not to the station, but to the junction ten miles away in order, as she said, not to miss one hour of my company. It was a long and loquacious drive. We did not pause for breath. As Mrs. Schwartz said good-by to me, she apologized profusely for her rudeness in leaving me alone. What should I ever do, she wondered, in that long and lonesome wait?

And yet as I have before suggested there are compensations for the lecturer, compensations so indispensable that one gladly takes issue with Schopenhauer when he asserts that the fundamental fault in the character of women is that they have no sense of justice. There is the perennial thrill of escape from the common round, the perennial joy of going a journey, of purchasing a fresh tooth-brush, of packing one's luggage and calling a taxi (to be paid for by someone else!). There are hours for reading on the train free from interruption; there is the unquenchable anticipation of discovery, within books or without them; there is time for desultory gazing out of car windows, for stamping indelibly upon one's mind things which will later flash upon the inward eye: the snow-covered, desolate prairies of Minnesota with the cold at twenty-six below zero, the friendly hills of northern New York white with fruit trees, a meadowlark on a post in Iowa singing above the rhythm of the train.

Sometimes, too, these compensations come directly or indirectly from my audiences in odd, unthought-of ways. Last winter I spoke in a great city before a most sophisticated group of women in a magnificent club-house. A wave of homesickness swept over me as I rose and faced them, for the reality of my bare college classroom, for the ancient, long-established graces of the college library. I looked among the modish hats, the well-cared for complexions for some sign, even the tiniest, of something more real, something simple, fundamental, upon which I could center my opening words. And in the front seat I found it, in the black-clad figure and thin little legs of an old, old woman. She had that light in her face I had missed in all the others, and on her legs, visible beneath her cotton stockings, were what we used to call in a more golden age than this, long flannel drawers! To her and her simplicity I said whatever I had to say, and I shall never cease to look back upon her with thanksgiving.

And two years ago through a chance account of a lecture of mine I received yet a greater and more inexhaustible blessing. A monk named Brother Ambrose wrote me from his monastery a confidential letter seeking my assistance in a matter of great moment. Silver and gold had he none, he said, but he was prepared to pay liberally in prayer. He was about to take part in a debate to be held a month later in the refectory of his cloister before the entire conventual chapter and he humbly sued for aid. He had unfortunately been assigned by his abbot the affirmative of the subject, "Resolved, that the literature of America in the nineteenth century is superior to the literature of England," and he was at a total loss as to how to proceed.

I spent many hours framing some suggestions for Brother Ambrose for a contest in which, I well know, he was doomed to certain defeat. But lo! between us, me at long distance and alone, him on the spot and doubtless surrounded by a legion of angels, he won the debate, and I received, am still receiving, and am due to receive, as long as I inhabit my earthly tabernacle, a multitude of prayers. What security to know that on disordered days which must be at least relatively prayerless from my own efforts, Brother Ambrose in the cool and still chapel of his monastery is caring for my tired mind and soul! And this would not be had I never spoken before a club of women!

The station clock says two. The station-master has returned, curious, incredulous but still taciturn. It is time to close these desultory ramblings and to think of sleep. And as I rise, I am conscious of hunger gnawing within me. What would I not now give for a cup of hot tea, for one of those decorated cup-cakes, for a ladyfinger, a chocolate peppermint, a fried chicken?

Puerto Rican Moonrise

Night is a steep black mountainside
  Thick with jasmine strewn;
Wearily up the craggy slope
  Flees the tired white moon.

She has no heart for jasmine flowers;
  She has no mind to rest:
Day will assail her from the east
  Whom she fled last night in the west.

MUNA LEE.

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EARTHQUAKE WEATHER

By EDWIN L. SABIN

FOR TWO or three days, here in Southern California, there had been an unseasonable sultriness, with a ground fog upon the lower levels back from the ocean, and a hazed sky—and, toward the close of the period, a murky ring around the midday sun although no rain was predicted.

And then, radiating from a center some eighty miles away, it came, *el temblor,* the earthquake; came rolling, so to speak, like a huge cannon-ball; came with a profound grinding rumble, and far concussions, and a shuddersome jarring and faltering and swaying of the solid earth, so that joists creaked and doors and windows rattled and pedestaled lamps bobbed and pictures scuffed back and forth along the walls. It passed almost ere the first outcry. Just a small shake hereabouts; but somewhere yonder, what?

"Earthquake weather. Been looking for a shake-up," said the wise-acre old-timers, after their judgment had been confirmed.

Thus we hear of the successes rather than of the failures in the tactics of the prophets, for the heads of the I-told-you-so's and the I-could-have-told-you-so's are prompt to wag.

Now, why "earthquake weather"? Does an occult condition of the atmosphere so oppress the earth below as to incite a revulsion of those fast-and-loose in'ards? Or do those in'ards, thrown out of balance by oil wells and gas wells and mines and inexorable, inestimable tons of man-placed structures, yield along the line of least resistance and by friction generate a static condition in the upper world?

There are earthquake sensitives who claim to the gift of smelling out, like the hounding witch-doctors of African tribes. They assert that in earthquake weather the odor of sulphur hangs in the waiting air. This sounds infernal. So far as I know an earthquake may occur by a slipping of gigantic faults or poorly contacted strata remote from hot springs and volcanic rocks indicative of active or surface-cooled fire.

While not admitting that anybody, reading signs, may be authorized to say "She's going to quake," just as Cap'n Bowline or the town weather sharp, squinting skyward, may pronounce "She's goin' to blow," I do admit that potent surface phenomena may herald the gathering climax of a quake. For instance, the heavy stillness, the thick, smothersome atmosphere, the red ball of a sun made lurid by floating vapors, which marked the prodigious quake at the close of 1811 in the central Mississippi Valley. These phenomena, however, attached to a quake already in progress; and so did the phenomena of that "earthquake weather" which attended upon the quake that only yesterday passed under my feet. Perceptibly passed, I should say.

We appear to be endowed on these premises with an animate seismograph in shape of a young Irish setter dog—an uncannily gifted half-animal, half-human creature whose forebears numbered, we are sure, a were-wolf. In her adolescence she is bent upon hearing all, seeing all and doing all; and succeeds. By that she represents the modern sex.

During a day or two of this "earthquake weather" which preceded the perceptible shock our 'Tinka had fits of leaping up, even from the dear occupation of gnawing a moldy old bone, and running forward barking and bristling. But inasmuch as no occasion for alarm materialized, we laid the spasm to that maggot in her brain department. She always is more crazy at the time of the full moon.

According to the records it should have been fifty-four minutes and twenty seconds past five o'clock in the evening when here on the concrete driveway back of the cottage where I was hammering at the remnant wheelbarrow, 'Tinka threw another Cassandra spasm, and apparently rebuked the void. This time the real lady of the premises scuttled out of the cottage with the exclamation, "Did you feel the earthquake? It shook the house—all the windows rattled!"

No, the insulating concrete had been neutral ground for me, and my hammering had dampered the other noises, even the low rumble. But with her antennae legs contacting the earth and communicating with her super-sensitive aerial framework 'Tinka had felt and heard the vibrations. And I am convinced that during this "earthquake weather" there had been lesser shocks, preliminary to the grand effort, and registering upon the highly strung nervous system of our seismographic 'Tinka.

Now while at intervals shock followed shock, the interrupted radio burst into staccato alarm and we knew, and in a twinkling half a continent knew, that yonder, eighty miles across the hills, a wealthy city lay partly in ruins and a wide countryside had suffered. All the night was poignant with distressed calls launched upon the boundless air—with appeals for doctors, nurses, first-aid supplies, tents, cots and the military forces of land and sea; with orders broadcast to the police and légionnaires; with the responses from near and far and with the shrieks of ambulances and police cars and motorcycles, even the strident roar of the swooping airplane.

This, you see, was a modern quake subject to reprisal by modern methods. The surface wires of telegraph and telephone may be down, all conduits may be ruptured, but so long as one transmitting aerial spans the infinite above the wreckage, so long as one amateur "ham" sits at his home-made set, amid the ruins, no stricken community is entirely alone with its anguish for more than a split second.

None the less an earthquake is *sui generis.* It is an example of an irresistible force overcoming an immovable body. The hurricane and the blizzard may be foretold. The ballooning cyclone may be sighted. When the earthquake announces, it has already arrived. There is the sudden grinding, rumbling, ogrish growling paroxysm ambushed in the bowels of the earth and speeding crescendo; the instant, sickening shudder and sway and heave (a curious rocking motion) of the solid underfoot turned fluid; the quick, stumbling outpour into the streets by a pale, shouting people; the repeated concussions, the crash

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of toppling walls (which usually fall outward), the spatter of chimneys and of plaster ceilings; and the pall of dust spreading over the lamentations.

From where I write the view opens upon a bright home and orchard valley which has known its earthquake, of date back to a sweetly basking summer day. One incident of a thousand in that mighty cataclysm sticks in memory. The head of a household was caught in the rear of his yard by the first shock. He heard the cries from the house, where his wife, he feared, was paralyzed with fright. He must to the rescue. But fight as he did for way he could not keep to his feet. The ground was as unstable as a billowing sheet of canvas. Whereupon he took to all fours and made passage.

Family and house endured the great quake. It was a frame house. There were congratulations and a sense of sufficiency. Only a day or two later did they discover, in the trip to the concreted basement, that the house no longer stood four-square upon its foundation. As by a miracle of levitation, the whole house, of two stories, had been lifted clear—or, we might say, bucked clear of the saddle—and then reseated askew. Thus the jolting earthquake may ape the twisting cyclone.

Well, it was easier to bring the foundation to the house than the house to the foundation. That was done, and today few who run may read.

As to our distraught householder again? R. L. S., in his fetching essay "A Gossip on Romance," cites certain classic marks sterling, certain salient episodes in romantic narrative, whose characterizing aspect in each case "stamps the story home like an illustration." "Crusoe recoiling from the footprint, Achilles shouting over against the Trojans, Ulysses bending the great bow, Christian running with his fingers in his ears"—these scenes, and such as these, in a story, are the story illusion and the story thesis. The mental snapshot of a powerful man clawing on all fours, like the last mariner on a canted deck, across a sunny narrow space between racked woodshed and racked house, in this fashion beating, as it were, through the breathless air, while the ground thunders and the near horizons thicken with the smoke of doom, is, to me, the proof and picture of earthquake weather.

To a Dead Tree

In this smooth trunk of sorrow there is strength
To stand unleafed against a winter sky,
Lifting grey limbs till violets leap at length
Under its blackened branches, bloom and die
Because no tender shade springs from the stem
Of sorrow. It is a tragic tree grown strong,
More kingly crowned with grief for anadem,
Hymning a deathless after-battle song,
At peace against the sunset: unashamed
In nakedness, in all the life of spring
Not lonely, but aware of things unnamed
In leafing, things unsung where birds sing,
Known only to dead roots about earth's heart,
Known to gaunt branches where a star may start.

EDA LOU WALTON.

COMMUNICATIONS

NEW LIGHT ON BIRTH CONTROL

Chicago, Ill.

TO the Editor: I could not quite make out just what Abbé Dimnet meant to say in his letter to THE COMMONWEAL a few issues back. I got the impression that for some theological reason he is opposed to the "rhythm theory" which was brought to the attention of the readers of THE COMMONWEAL by Mr. Smothers's article, "New Light on Birth Control." He seems to be afraid that Catholics will confuse the natural method of birth control, the one that is sanctioned by the Church, with the unnatural method, namely, the use of contraceptives.

An altogether different view is expressed by Dr. John O'Brien in the *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* for May, a view that is prophetic and realistic, a view that is full of sound common sense and reëchoes high Christian idealism. This beautiful passage is from his scholarly article:

"The only argument advanced against the general dissemination of the complete Catholic doctrine on this urgent question seems to be the spurious objection that, if all Catholic couples were aware of a legitimate method of limiting their offspring, many of them might decide to have no children at all. In the first place, this objection ignores the ineradicable love of children which fills the heart of every normal human being. . . . What a sobering, uplifting thought for decent Catholic parents when they realize that their privilege of coöperating with God in His work of creation is also a responsibility that must be deliberately accepted or declined! As for the other class of Catholics, a large proportion, if not the great majority, are probably practising birth control already. . . . Lastly, let us not forget that rapidly growing army of individuals who with mounting bitterness find themselves condemned to a life of involuntary celibacy because they cannot undertake the responsibility of the unlimited family which they believe is the normal result of Catholic marriage. Moralists who are opposing the general dissemination of a knowledge of the sterile period . . . might do well to consider whether the interests of Christian society and morals would not be better served by promoting more and earlier marriages among this economically unfortunate class, even though the couples can foresee no possibility of being able to provide properly for more than a few children.

"We priests should be the first to resent the implication that our people's piety and loyalty to Catholic principles are predicated on ignorance of scientific progress in any field. Even supposing that this ignorance could be prolonged indefinitely, and that anyone were so foolish as to wish it to be, how acceptable to the God of all knowledge would be a service based on ignorance? Yet, simply to preserve this vitiated service, in so many cases rendered grudgingly today because of servile fear, we are allowing thoughts of rebellion and despair to develop in the breasts of millions who are being deprived of their birthright—a knowledge of the true teaching of the Church on this important subject."

LEO SWEENEY.

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Philadelphia, Pa.

TO the Editor: Regarding the criticism by Abbé Ernest Dimnet of the article, "New Light on Birth Control," I fear he has the wrong interpretation of Mr. Smothers's excellent paper, as well as THE COMMONWEAL's former editorials, etc.

Holy Mother Church has never preached, nor permitted, the practice of birth control; yet in her wide vision of the past and present conditions of this world's changing circumstances, she is ever ready and willing to meet the exigencies of present needs. Mr. Smothers's capable article is not a "vindication of contraception, nor an advocacy of its practice." It shows the wide latitude which sympathetic Mother Church has, in her willingness to allow her troubled children the widest possible privilege, without violating either the spirit or letter of God's laws.

There is a practical, a humane, a modern and a medical side of birth control; yet all these viewpoints can, and do, fit in with the spiritual side, advocated by Catholic theology, throughout all the past centuries.

The whole philosophical principle, so it appears to me, is based on a normal physiologic function of a normally acting female organ, which normal function is a natural act—an act of nature. The laws of God may supersede, but they never violate, the laws of nature; and in making use of an act of nature—not taking advantage of it, or not, as Abbé Dimnet stated, countenancing "scientific avoidance of conception"—Holy Mother Church, we believe, neither negatively nor positively violates the law of God, "Thou shall not kill."

Natural birth control is the making use of a natural act, i.e., an act of nature, and, as such, is not a violation of the laws of morality.

ALFRED J. M. TREACY, M.D.

CURRENCY STABILIZATION

Clewiston, Fla.

TO the Editor: I am not a financial expert, but would like to submit my opinion on the subject of the restabilization of international currencies on the so-called "gold" standard.

It seems logical that, if all the principal nations were "off" the gold standard, in the sense that Great Britain and the United States now are, and no artificial measures were taken to "peg," or to depress the exchange values, the foreign exchange quotations would, if stable over a considerable period, register the true relative values of these currencies, in terms of the dollar.

Under existing conditions, these values would be proper to fix, in returning to a modified gold, gold and silver, or any standard, provided it is uniform for all nations. Extraordinary changes in any nation's status, due to war or other causes, would render necessary a revision in its money's ratio to the dollar.

Such revision did take place after the World War, but according to what the individual nation concerned thought best for its own interest. The proper value which would give the right balance of internal prices and wages, as well as equal external advantages with other nations, would, of necessity, be incapable of exact determination.

England tried to maintain the pound at $4.86, its pre-war parity in terms of the dollar, but found it physically impossible to do so. That figure was too high.

Perhaps if France had not revalued the franc too low, England would have succeeded in holding the pound at par. Nobody knows. But the steady flow of gold to France since 1926 was largely due to the low revaluation of the franc at 3.92 cents, compared to 19.3 cents before the war. Eighty percent of the national debt was wiped out (I mean internal debt), causing great hardship to holders of government bonds, whose fixed incomes were thus curtailed 80 percent.

The Italian lira was revalued slightly too high, but Mussolini's guess was better for Italy and the world than the guesses of England and France.

As a result of successive currency depreciations, the dollar became isolated and stagnant, as it was too dear compared to the others. The recent move to let the dollar seek its own level without gold support was the only sensible thing to do.

The next move should be a general revaluation, in terms of the dollar, of other currencies. The actual gold content of the dollar is unimportant, but the stabilization of the ratios of other moneys to the dollar is important.

My humble guess as to what some other moneys should be stabilized at, approximately, in the return to gold, or other standard, is as follows:

Pound sterling	$4.00	Dutch guilder	$0.50
French franc	$0.05	German mark	$0.20
Swiss franc	$0.20	Spanish peseta	$0.10
Italian lira	$0.05	Canadian dollar	$1.00
Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, krone	$0.20	Mexican peso	$0.50

Let the currencies be stablized thus, by international agreement, along with a return to some uniform gold, or gold and silver, standard. Provide international supervision to keep them at these fixed values, and an international gold pool to make it possible to keep them fixed.

Then, under the aegis of international coöperation and good-will, some sort of world economic stability will be achieved, and better times might reasonably be expected for the whole world (as soon as the political problems are solved). It would at least be a step toward recovery.

COUNT HARVEY.

THE CHURCH AND CRIME

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor: In the issue of April 19 appeared a letter from Ada A. Christie, which purported to be a comment on an earlier letter written by Reverend Charles J. Callan, O.P., entitled "The Church and Crime."

As a Catholic and a member of the Bar I desire to take friendly issue with Ada Christie, particularly with reference to that portion of the article which is a general indictment, at least by inference, of the criminal procedure, and our non-Catholic friends.

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It is assumed the conditions complained of are alleged to exist in the city of Philadelphia, a jurisdiction of which, I am free to admit, I know nothing, but that such conditions are general I deny. That there are numerous instances where our unfortunate Catholics are deserted by their bretheren in the Faith is indisputable, but it is not true that as a result they are "left to the mercy (?) of the enemy." If Ada Christie is at all familiar with criminal procedure she knows that any person charged with a criminal offense may, if he desires, have capable counsel appointed by the court, or provided in some jurisdictions by the city, county or state, to represent him, whether he be Catholic, Jew, Buddhist or Mohammedan. I have known of numerous instances where counsel were appointed by the court because the defendants were financially unable to employ them. Days were consumed in preparing and trying the cases, and considerable sums of money expended by the attorneys, without ever having been reimbursed, either, for the necessary expenditures or for fees, by anyone. I do not know whether any of these offenders were Catholic, but I do know that the question of religion did not once arise, and that some of the attorneys were Catholics.

If Ada Christie has a yen for statistics, an examination of those compiled by any creditable authority will disclose that, actually, an infinitesimal number of persons are convicted of offenses of which they are innocent, and seldom, if ever, because of the lack of proper representation. No human institution is error proof.

It is, of course, recognized by many people that in some jurisdictions corruption exists in the administration of criminal law, but this does not shed the light of truth on the statement that "numbers of perfectly innocent Catholics are wrongfully imprisoned or publicly disgraced, simply because they lacked funds to help themselves, and were deserted in their hour of need by their Catholic brethren."

My brief experience has indicated that Catholics, as individuals, have no greater claim to innocence than members of any other faith—and illustrations of the truth of this may be found in the records of some of America's better-known outlaw gentry.

I believe firmly that a true follower of the Faith is the perfect citizen, but the article does not attempt to distinguish between the true Catholic and a Catholic in name only.

Few understand the desirability of reform in the criminal practice as thoroughly as members of the Bench and Bar, upon whom the stigma falls. But, real reform and improvement can begin only when bigoted and biased attacks yield to constructive criticism based upon a clear and honest view of the true situation. Hysterical exhortations provide no means of facing facts. An appeal to Catholics to assist fellow members confined in the "docks" is not without its noble aspect, but let us not forget the other angle so aptly expressed by the distinguished jurist, Mr. Justice Holmes, when he observed that, in our courts, "The danger is greater that the criminal will escape justice than that he will be subjected to tyranny."

RAYMOND SPARKS.

SHAW AND WELLS

Chicago, Ill.

TO the Editor: Is it not about time for the American people to call a halt to the insults of men like Shaw and Wells? Of course Shaw has been a mountebank all his life. His favorite gesture seems to be thumbing his nose at the world but especially at the United States. His recent brutal retort to Helen Keller was quite in line with his attitude to all things American.

And now Wells in his last book, "Bulpington of Blup" (it takes almost a harelip to say it) gives the English view of why the Americans went into the war. Yet in the many reviews of that book, even in the review in this week's COMMONWEAL, I have not seen the slightest exception taken to these statements. I quote from the book.

Sir Lucien says: "These Americans are coming over and they aint come over only to fight Germans. They've got business instincts. Trust them. They're poker trained. This is a war on several fronts, my boy, and the proof of a war is what happens afterward. If I had my way, I'd win the war with All British stuff come what might."

And still more offensive: "Americans were everywhere now with an abundance of money and with their naive appetites much in evidence. Their resolve to drink Paris to the dregs as well as win the war was manifest and encouraged. They paid their tribute to France the Liberator in every restaurant and brothel. They croaked their profound moral disapproval of Germany and their desire to express it vividly in bloodshed, evisceration and smashing. Their phraseology threw strange new lights upon the war and the spirit in which war may be waged."

When a man of Well's prominence puts such sentiments into the mouth of one of his leading characters, it is time for intelligent Americans to protest, and for him to single out our American soldiers as drunkards and debauchés is an insult which it is hard to forgive.

MARY ONAHAN GALLERY.

A CATHOLIC CIRCULATING LIBRARY

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: I was very much interested in Helen Ready Bird's letter (April 19) with regard to a Catholic circulating library. I wonder if she has exhausted in this regard the resources of the New York Public Library. There are many branches in which Catholic books can be found, and when other branches have them they will be procured by one's own branch if asked for. Unfortunately Catholics are not great readers and especially not of Catholic books. I have known excellent Catholic works to be on the shelves of a branch library unasked for, for a year or more. If Catholics applied for books oftener, many more of them would be bought. I have excellent reason to know the good-will of the New York Public Library in this matter. Some of the branches have a splendid collection of Catholic books. Consult your own librarian in that regard and you will often be surprised at what she can secure for you.

JAMES J. WALSH, M.D.

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THE PLAY AND SCREEN

By RICHARD DANA SKINNER

The Mask and the Face

LUIGI CHIARELLI, the author of the Theatre Guild's latest presentation, is not Luigi Pirandello, not even when he is translated, as in the present instance, by Somerset Maugham. Pirandello at least knows how to write a tolerably good play, even though the philosophy behind it is a shallow sophistry parading in wisdom's garments. But all the king's writers and all the king's actors could not make Chiarelli's dull epigrams a play.

Surely somewhere between San Francisco and Moscow the Guild ought to have been able to find a new play worthy to be its last offering of the season—a play of some substance, at least, if not of brilliancy. What of Dan Totheroh's unproduced play on the Brontë sisters? Or are there not plays by Sidney Howard, Elmer Rice, George Kelly or other likely playwrights which might have been produced? The Guild would probably answer that its play committee has searched high and low throughout Europe and America and has found nothing. But what has been the quality of the search? Has it been open-minded, willing to accept an unpretentious play if it be good, just as a play? Or has the Guild been searching too hard for the bizarre and so missed the obvious? At all events, it is very sad that our premier producing group should present anything so puerile and shop-worn as a new translation of a play that was unsuccessfully produced some years ago.

If you can imagine a crowd of puppets assembled at a villa on Lake Como, each given to uttering platitudes with an air of discovery, and one of them boasting that he would instantly kill his wife if he found her unfaithful, you will understand the general material of this play. Imagine further that the wife is unfaithful, that the husband is unable to live up to his boast and instead of killing his wife merely sends her into exile and proclaims to the world that he has killed her and drowned her body in the lake. Then invent a second act in which the murderous husband, acquitted by the courts, has become the idol of all the foolish women for hundreds of miles around, but is somewhat embarrassed by having his wife return just as the neighbors are celebrating the funeral of a body found in the lake and supposed to be hers. At full last, arrange a reconciliation between the husband and the supposedly dead wife, have the husband realize that he has gone through all this flim flam because he was afraid of the public ridicule that would follow a failure to live up to his boast, have the neighbors more distressed over their wasted funeral tears than delighted at the wife's safe return, and there you have Signor Chiarelli's play for all it is worth.

The author adds for deceived husbands the philosophy that they should remain patient and tolerant in their uncomfortable status in the hope of becoming, at some distant date, the "last lovers" of their legal mates. Several good actors are wasted on this play, including Leo Carroll, Stanley Ridges and Judith Anderson. (At the Guild Theatre.)

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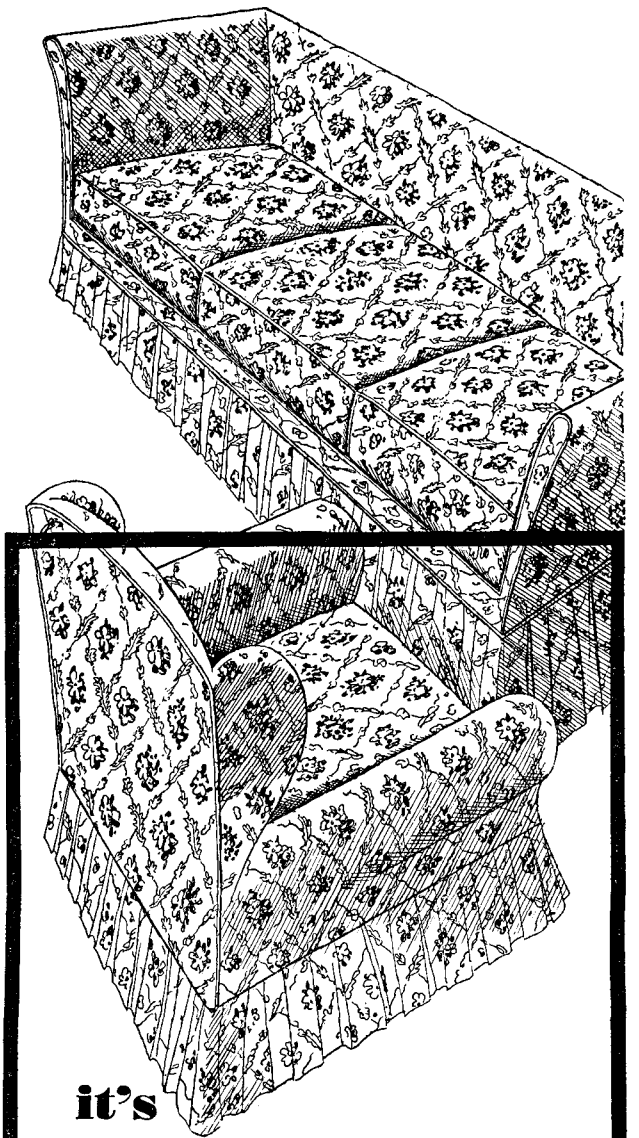

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HARPER & BROTHERS—*Publishers*—NEW YORK

The Silver Cord

IT IS some years now since Sidney Howard decided to dramatize certain of the more obvious aspects of Freud's findings, and wrote his play of the "devouring mother." As a play, it had many good points, but as a psychological study it was an immature transcription of the text-books which never sought nor reached the subtler ties that distort character and half-consciously shape life decisions. The screen version of the play is no better in this respect than the stage original. It is better solely in the finer gradations of feeling and in the fuller elaboration of motives. For ones, at least, the screen has been used with great intelligence to fill out the gaps which must occur in any play divided into conventional acts and scenes.

Laura Hope Crews again takes the part of Mrs. Phelps—the mother who wished to be everything in her two sons' lives. She is better than in the play itself. Irene Dunne plays the scientifically-minded daughter-in-law who at last succeeds in getting her husband out of Mrs. Phelps's clutches, and because Miss Dunne is a little softer than Elizabeth Risdon, who created the part on the stage, and because the greater amplitude of the screen story gives more opportunity to develop various sides of the girl's character, the result is more satisfactory and plausible. We have, for example, the earlier love scenes between the girl and the older Phelps boy, and an intimate scene between them when, to escape Mrs. Phelps, they go down for a midnight ice-box supper and try to reach an understanding. The limitations of the stage did not permit such details. They help, enormously.

But the fact remains that the play itself is a shallow bit of work. It has very little to do with the central problem of the so-called "mother complex." That problem, as it is now understood, relates far less to a son's attachment to his own mother than to a general tendency among human beings of both sexes to "regress" toward the irresponsibility of early childhood. The mother idea represents to many a grown man and woman a previous mental state in which decisions were made by others, in which the problem of earning a livelihood and facing difficult tasks never presented itself—in brief, a state of being cared for and looked after. It is the yearning to go back to this infantile state which is so deeply seated in many human beings that it leaves them through life with crippled wills and an instinct to seek escape from all unpleasant realities. The real silver cord, or "tie to the mother," may be strong in a person whose parents died years before. It is really a tie to the state of childhood itself, of which the mother is merely the most universally recognized symbol. Sidney Howard does not touch on this deeper problem at all. He merely describes a type of woman who deliberately seeks to keep her sons in a state of mental childhood so that they will depend on her for everything. He lets us assume that when the son breaks with his mother, he has won a victory over her. He neglects the all-important fact that the son has not won a victory over himself. There is every indication that he merely accepts the mothering of his strong-minded wife as a pleasant substitute for the tyranny and care of his mother. In that lies the falsity of the play.

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BOOKS

A Letter Writer

Lord Jeffery Amherst, by J. C. Long. New York: The Macmillan Company. $4.00.

LORD AMHERST is one of those outstanding colonial and revolutionary figures, whose stature has been sensibly diminishing with the passage of time. In recent years—until 1926, in fact—it has appeared his destiny to be remembered merely as the protagonist of the important institution which bears his name.

But 1926 changed all this. For, in that year, in the cellar of a country house in Kent, there came to light seventeen chests containing the full correspondence of Lord Amherst—a total of 85,000 letters. The process of collating this avalanche of letters has advanced so far that Mr. Long has been able to give us a volume in which all important statements in his thesis are adequately documented. His style is scholarly and restrained; his treatment of disputed points eminently fair.

Jeffery Amherst, born in 1717, scion of a Kentish county family, had attained the age of forty and a colonelcy, when William Pitt, the Great Commoner, began to juggle with the jig-saw puzzle which was the British Empire. Beaten on land and sea, her ancient military and naval prestige humbled in the dust, England lay prostrate before a belligerent Europe, when Pitt began the meteoric career, which was to raise his country to the zenith of her power. Pitt was a new man amid the reactionaries of the Georgian court and, characteristically, he chose new men to aid him in carrying out the plans, with which he hoped to remodel the world. None of his appointments was more amazing than his choice of a plain colonel—Jeffery Amherst—as Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in North America, with orders to undertake the capture of Louisberg.

Mr. Long's description of the conquest of that formidable Nova Scotian fortress leaves nothing to be desired. When he adds to this a masterly analysis of the Quebec campaign during which, under Amherst's command, French power on this continent crashed to its final ruin, he has definitely established Amherst's claim to the attention of American readers. The French-Canadian threat, which had for so long driven the American colonist into the arms of England, was thus finally removed and the colonists left free to follow a political bent, which inevitably led to independence. To the man whose work rendered this possible, every American owes a debt of gratitude.

One of the most interesting interludes in Mr. Long's book concerns Jane Dalyson, Amherst's first wife. I confess to a liking for Jane, forced to manage her husband's Riverhead estate, while military duties kept her liege lord in London, and eating her heart out in the process. Having an old-fashioned idea that a wife's place is at her husband's side, I sympathize with Jane. So—to Jane Dalyson Amherst, jealous and heartsick, our most respectful salutations!

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NEXT WEEK

FUN WHILE IT LASTED, by Charles Morrow Wilson, reviews the wild-cat credit orgy of speculation on land and the new farm relief measures that strive to re-create a solvent basis of return on capital and labor applied to land. These measures assume, points out Mr. Wilson, that the farmer's land has value only if it provides the farmer and his family with a living wage in return for intelligent tillage. They strive to have it appreciated that the farmer is a craftsman, whose productive tool is land and whose worth-whileness as a craftsman requires unmolested use of that tool. The farmer without the tool is a drone in society and a drain on what are left of the going concerns of the nation, unless he and his family are to be driven off to starve to death or eat grass. And the tool, without the farmer is worthless to the banks or other investors who hold engraved titles of possession of it. Mr. Wilson's factual and comprehensive article clarifies a fundamental problem of our times . . . . A NOTE ON THE BOURGEOIS WORLD, by Jacques Maritain, the first part of which appears in the present issue, will be concluded next week . . . . THE ALUMNI CENTER ASSOCIATION, by Edward S. Dore, describes a new center for Catholic men where there will be an attempt to continue the intellectual pursuits and associations begun in college and university and then too often unfortunately allowed to lapse . . . . MUSCLE SHOALS, by Littell McClung, pictures in some detail the colossal new development in the Tennessee Valley . . . . A CRADLE OF CATHOLICISM, by Leo J. Washila, tells of Old St. Joseph's Church in Philadelphia, which is this spring celebrating the second centenary of its foundation.

Introducing Parnassus

Preface to Poetry, by Theodore Maynard. New York: The Century Co. $2.75 .

THIS is decidedly a volume to own and have handy on the shelf. It is a delight and a stimulation to read it straight through; then the book is a pleasant one to which to turn for browsing.

It has a nice simplicity which is not condescending nor too geometrical. No doubt it is admirable for class work and can be highly recommended to teachers; but while it is architectonic, deliberately conceived and proportioned, it has a spontaneity, the natural ease of conversation of a cultured gentleman, a richness in diversity that saves it from every onus ever thought of in connection with instructive works.

It is full of quotations of excellent poems that make it almost an anthology loosely knit with running comments and notes on the poet and his subject, or his inspiration, or the circumstances surrounding the inspiration. The author indubitably has somewhat of a penchant for the Lake Poets and their like; but a man would have to go far to find less bombast and whining and more beauty. And if the author rather ignores the transitional poets and those who arrogate to themselves the name of modern, that is every person's privilege surely and one that will probably be progressively taken. The book has life, it is a charming introduction to a more abundant life, to a broader appreciation of poetry. Through it,

> " . . . with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things."

And the writer properly identifies the sources of poetry with innocence, wisdom, beauty and joy that is powerful.

FREDERIC THOMPSON.

A Kentucky Missionary

A Light of the Church in Kentucky: Very Reverend Samuel Thomas Wilson, O.P., by Victor F. O'Daniel. Washington: Dominican Press. $3.00.

AMONG Father O'Daniel's works on notable Dominicans, such as Charles McKenna, Bishop Edward Fenwick, Matthew O'Brien and Bishop Richard Miles, this volume on Father Wilson, a pioneer educator, builder and first provincial, stands out as a valuable contribution to early Western history and the beginnings of the Church in America. A veritable historiographer of his order, the writer is steeped in the history of Maryland and Kentucky and in the most intimate details of Dominicana. He writes in an informal style, quotes extensively from original sources, and handles his materials in a scientific and courageous spirit. It would be well if other early missionaries were made so well known to students of early Catholic history in this country. And it is to be hoped that Dr. O'Daniel will likewise recount the career of Bishop Thomas Grace of St. Paul.

Wilson, born of a merchant family in London, was educated at the refugee Dominican College at Bornhem

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and at St. Thomas of Aquin in Louvain, was ordained a Dominican priest in Ghent, and taught at Bornhem until the arrival of Jacobin forces. An exile in England, he assisted in the establishment of the Dominican institute at Carshalton in Surrey. Again in Bornhem, whose buildings he bought in at auction from corrupt agents of the Directory, he managed to carry on until Napoleon's accession brought slight relief. Discouraged by the secularization of the institution under orders from the legate in Paris, the Dominicans came to the States, Wilson and Tuite following Fenwick and Angier. A missionary at Cartwright's Creek, Kentucky, provincial of the infant community, builder of St. Thomas College near Springfield, where Jefferson Davis received his first lessons, colaborer with Flaget and Fenwick, and founder of the first convent of the Third Order of St. Dominic, Wilson gave a score of years to the Kentucky missions and won renown as a preacher and an educator among frontiersmen and stout pioneers regardless of creedal distinctions.

RICHARD J. PURCELL.

John Brown

God's Angry Man, by Leonard Ehrlich. New York: Simon and Schuster. $2.50.

WHEN a fiction writer portrays a historical character, the reader cheerfully anticipates a certain juggling of facts. Mr. Ehrlich, in presenting John Brown, declares his book to be neither biography nor history but adds that it "moves scrupulously within a frame of historical fact." Nevertheless, he has an intensely personal viewpoint of John Brown as the martyred hero, and many readers will be alienated by Mr. Ehrlich bearing haloes. They, in annoyance, might then dismiss "God's Angry Man" and deny its excellence as fiction.

It has that excellence on many counts. John Brown here is not lifelike; he is real. So, too, is that country which naturally produced such a stern, uncompromising and indefatigable son. John Brown was typical of the frontiers. He knew many—Ohio, the far Adirondacks, Kansas. Mr. Ehrlich has transplanted all of their bleakness and harshness to his pages and little happiness lightens the continuous toil and abject poverty of their conquerors. The reader is made to realize how logical was each step in the strange career of John Brown, a man of one idea, one vision. Thus the assassin of Pottawotamie becomes the avenger of an angry God; the condemned of Harper's Ferry is prepared to ascend the pedestal made ready for him by the abolitionists.

Throughout this grim narrative, the author has curiously interlarded a poetical streak of writing of unusual effectiveness in certain passages but at other times too affected and tedious. Also Mr. Ehrlich is too confusingly partial to the cut-back method of telling a story. But once he has built up the illuminating details of Brown's boyhood and the early days of Brown's father, quicker action is wedded to a style equally clear and rapid-paced. When Brown is captured and tried, Mr. Ehrlich attains a power of description which leaves nothing to be desired.

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Briefer Mention

White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands, by George Pullen Jackson. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press. $4.50.

STUDENTS and historians of the future may be thankful that such books as this are possible; and they well may be, as an ever-increasing number of books similar to this one, books that are definite contributions to American literature, are published obviously with no view to profits by university presses. Mr. Jackson's present volume is an intelligent, painstaking and very interesting research in American folk-lore. It is a study of religious singing among the "upland" peoples of the rural South, bringing us in close touch with a group who publish and use thousands of song books yearly, who teach these songs, gather for "singings" and conventions, sometimes carolling two hundred songs a day; people who live virtually in song—with all of their vocal music notated in a primitive and unique fashion, using "shape" notes instead of the conventional round ones. Mr. Jackson produces evidence to show that many of the Negro spirituals found their beginnings in these songs of the whites. Changes, however, are apparent in both words and music of the various songs that the Negroes took over. An excellent book about a subject unknown to most people. It is well illustrated and carries an index.

With Hearts Courageous, by Edna Kenton. New York: Liveright. $2.50.

AS HER many books show, Miss Kenton has studied the Jesuit Relations with great zeal and care. The present volume is a graphic summary of the missionary epic. Against a definite and varied background of Indian custom, she places first the story of the martyrs and then the history of the explorers. The writing is so pleasing and lucid that young people will be fascinated, but older people will also find the book much to their liking. In short this is excellent popular history and the author's attitude is in every sense of the term commendable.

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